

The Sūtric, the Tantric and Beyond:
A Mahāmudrā paradigm – as well as its Indian and Tibetan sources of inspiration –
in the *Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate*

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Abstract

This dissertation is a historical, philosophical, and textual study of the 12th-century Tangut work *Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate* (鞞鞞巖巖巖巖 *大印究竟要集) compiled by Dehui (fl. mid- to late-12th century) – a Xixia-based Buddhist scholar – from his Tibetan teacher brTson-'grus's lectures, together with its commentarial expositions in the *Notes on the Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate* (鞞鞞巖巖巖巖 *大印究竟要集记) composed by Dehui's circle if not directly by Dehui himself. The main goals of this research are twofold: first, I trace the formative process of Mahāmudrā as to how the discourse emerged out of the Yoganiruttara cycle of Indian Buddhist Tantra, and how it took shape in the post-tantric environment across the Himalaya; second, I analyze the twofold scheme of sūtric and tantric paths towards Mahāmudrā as presented in the *Keypoints* and a piece of exoteric doxography (*siddhānta*) in the *Notes* against the Indian and Tibetan Mahāmudrā topography I have unpacked as the first goal.

In demonstrating how the multiple philosophical and practical threads from Buddhist Tantra and Mahāyāna scholasticism were integrated into the creation of the Tangut Mahāmudrā architecture, this research argues that the *Keypoints* juxtaposes two soteriological approaches – those of the visionary and the embodied modes respectively – to non-conceptual realization, the experiential domain wherein the sūtric and tantric paths are bridged.

Keywords: Mahāmudrā, Tangut Buddhist literature, Buddhist Tantra, Mahāyāna scholasticism, non-conceptual realization

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1. Introduction

A doctrinal opposition has existed in Buddhism between “positive-mystical” and “negative-intellectualist” conceptions of awakening (Schmithausen 1981). Leaning towards the positive-mystic end characteristic of the “Buddha-nature” tradition, the Mahāmudrā teaching of the Tibetan bKa’-brgyud sect had been subjected to attacks by intellectually predisposed critics. Scholarly accounts of this controversy, inextricably interwoven with a history of sectarian polemics, nevertheless downplay the conceptual space defined in either camp. Despite studies on the post-15th-century bKa’-brgyud efforts to defend Mahāmudrā as being grounded in Indian Mahāyāna scholastic philosophies (Higgins & Draszczyk 2016), scant attention has hitherto been paid to the doctrinal foundation of Mahāmudrā in its initial stages of transmission across the Himalayan range. To fill this gap, I explore a 12th-century Tangut Mahāmudrā presentation formulated under the Tibetan auspices, an early case that found expressions in this mystical-intellectualist polarity.

1.1. Research purposes

By coming to intelligible terms with religious realities at the intersection between Tangut, Tibetan, and Indian cultures, my aim is to reveal and account for the intellectual history and discursive framework of the Tangut Mahāmudrā work *Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate* (𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊 *大印究竟要集; “Keypoints” hereafter) compiled by Dehui (fl. mid- to late-12th century) – a Xixia-based scholarly monk – from

his Tibetan teacher brTson-'grus's lectures, together with its commentarial expositions in the *Notes on the Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate* (鞞鞞巖巖巖巖巖巖 *大印究竟要集记; “Notes” hereafter) composed by Dehui's circle if not by Dehui himself. In specific, I bring the Tangut Mahāmudrā into connections with the post-tantric ethos and Mahāyāna scholastic philosophy, the doctrinal inspirations Mahāmudrā draws on to carve out the meditative experience it intends to illicit or circumscribe.

The study shows that the *Keypoints* – as a continuation of the Indian and Tibetan processes in which Mahāmudrā rose as an overarching rubric which embraced and transcended both the sūtric and tantric paths to ultimacy – presents one early Mahāmudrā architecture which organizes Buddhist thoughts and practices in a progressive “path stage” (*lam rim*) structure. Moreover, the exoteric doxography (*siddhānta*)¹ contained in the *Notes* commentary brings the Tangut Mahāmudrā further into line with the Mahāyāna mystical pursuit of non-conceptual knowledge (*avikalpa-jñāna*), and its discursive framework shows an integration of the Buddha-nature doctrine with the syncretic Yogāgāca-Madhyamaka strand as philosophical ground for the tantric praxis.

¹ The term “doxography” as it was applied in the original context referred to the collected summaries of different Greek philosophical views. Wilhelm Halbfass (1988: 263–286, 349–368) follows the sense of “the collection of philosophical views” and explores the roots of Indian doxographic thinking. Recently, quite a few Buddhist studies scholars have found the term useful, using it to label the Buddhist genre of doctrinal classification literature. Jacob Dalton (2005) applies “doxography” to the tantric Buddhist classification schemes which mainly concern difference in ritual and yogic practices. In this article, I use “doxography” to describe a particular type or genre of Buddhist writing characterized by the *siddhānta* (*grub mtha'*) paradigm. The Buddhist *siddhānta* work sets forth the philosophical views of various schools – Buddhist and non-Buddhist – in a systematic fashion, usually with an agenda of demonstrating the superiority of the author's own philosophical position.

1.2. Background

From the 11th through 13th centuries, the mass of yogic techniques informed by the Yoganiruttara cycle of Buddhist Tantra flowed over the Himalayan range and extended to the Hexi Corridor. The Tibetan, Tangut, and Chinese peoples who had been exposed to such a yogic and tantric culture actively drew on Indian Buddhist legacies as taxonomical and conceptual device to structure and make sense of these cutting-edge contemplative techniques. One such discursive device was the Mahāmudrā rubric considered as the pinnacle of a systematic presentation of both tantric and sūtric paths to ultimacy.

Mahāmudrā constitutes in its mature and systematic presentation a Buddhist path that maps out the mystical quest for direct experience of ultimate reality. Figuring with increasingly soteriological prominence in the evolution of Indian Buddhist Tantra, the term *mahāmudrā* became a central topic of discourse in the Yoganiruttara cycle, denoting “the nature of reality and of the mind, a ritual or meditative procedure for seeing the nature, and the enlightenment ensuing from that realization.”² A unifying theme in the Indian Buddhist siddha anthologies, *mahāmudrā* was celebrated in poetic terms as the pinnacle of tantric path defined by yogic techniques of *subtle physiology* contemplation. In the meantime, *mahāmudrā* as an index of ultimacy started to evoke philosophical themes resonating Mahāyāna scholasticism, such that efforts to account for *mahāmudrā* in articulate philosophies – primarily Yogācāra and Madhyamaka – were witnessed in the works of Maitrīpa (c. 1007–1085) and his circle, who laid dual claims to siddhic and scholarly identities. Read as amenable to the traditional *pāramitā* (perfection) mode of

² See Jackson 2005: 5597.

Mahāyāna praxis, *mahāmudrā* became Mahāmudrā, a central topic towards a full-fledged body of the Buddhist practices and doctrines constituted of both sūtric and tantric paths, wherein its discursive paradigm shifted from the siddhic ecstatic mode to the scholarly philosophical mode.

In Tibet, Mahāmudrā came to prominence from the 12th-century Buddhist “renaissance,” a time when Tibetans received new floods of Buddhist teachings and traditions from India and started to make their own sense of them.³ All shaped by the Yogāniruttara cycles of tantras which dominated the late Indian tantric Buddhist landscape, many of the New Translation (*gsar ma*) traditions emerging in this period usually gave Mahāmudrā a privileged position in their descriptions of the Buddhist path and goal. However, Mahāmudrā is most closely associated with the bKa’-bgyud school, within which it became an overarching rubric for a systematic discourse. The 12th-century Tibetan institutional outreach to the Tangut Xixia kingdom (1038–1227) lead to the circulation of Mahāmudrā in Tangut, part of which even ended up in Chinese translation.

As the Yogāniruttara cycle of Buddhist Tantra spread to the Hexi Corridor⁴ through the Tibetan medium, the area was under the domination of the Tangut Xixia regime (1038–1227), wherein the newly created Tangut writing system gained popularity as one *lingua franca* coexisting with Chinese. The imported Yogāniruttara repertoire thus

³ As for the historical processes of how Tibetans after a period of dark age characterized by social unrest and political fragmentation (r. 850–950) have “used the evolving literature and practices of later esoteric Buddhism as iconic forms and points of reference to reconstruct institutions, found monasteries, and reorganize the political realities,” see Davidson 2005.

⁴ The Hexi Corridor, as part of the trade route networks conventionally designated as the Silk Road, runs northwest from the bank of the Yellow River up till the nowadays Xinjiang-Gansu border and is flanked by the Tibetan Plateau and the Gobi Desert to the south and the north respectively.

ended up in the Xixia domain primarily in Tangut – and also partially in Chinese – composition and translation. As a continuation of the Indian and Tibetan processes, the Tangut and Sinitic residents in – or Tibetan visitors to – Xixia attempted to frame and account for the yogic techniques and tantric doctrines at their disposal via inherited hermeneutical rubrics such as Mahāmudrā, under which the tantric path was brought into alignment with the traditional Mahāyāna *pāramiā* way. As such, the Tangut- and Chinese-language Xixia Mahāmudrā materials allow insights into the Xixia efforts to synthesize and systematize the latest Indian Buddhist sources of Tantra and scholastic philosophy.

The Tangut-language Mahāmudrā work *Keypoints* constitutes a systematic and structured presentation of Mahāmudrā grounded in both Sūtra and Tantra. It contains a twofold paradigm of causal and resultant (i.e., sūtric and tantric) vehicles, each progressing through nine stages. Both vehicles converge in the eighth stages of non-conceptuality and culminate in the ninth, the Mahāmudrā attainment. So far the earliest systematic presentation of Mahāmudrā in the stage path (*lam rim*) structure, the *Keypoints* reveals a window into how Tanguts inherited and deployed multiple spiritual and discursive threads across the Himalayan range and the Hexi Corridor to the construction of a Mahāmudrā architecture. Furthermore, its commentary on the *Keypoints*'s causal and resultant vehicles unfortunately missing in the extant manuscripts, the *Notes* embeds in its expositions of the *Keypoints*'s opening verses an exoteric doxography which mirrors the causal vehicle in progressive structure. The scholastic models and hermeneutics applied to scaffold the *Notes*'s doxography reflects the Tangut interpretative agency in deploying the Mahāyāna discursive sources at their disposal for a

philosophy for and of Mahāmudrā. The tantric alternative to the exoteric doxography – which supposedly parallels the *Keypoints*'s resultant vehicle – however, is not found in the currently available part of the *Notes*.

As indicated by its notation, the *Keypoints* was compiled by Dehui (猷龔 *德慧), a *śramaṇa* from the Helan Mountain (蕤龔死蘭 *兰山沙门).⁵ According to the *Notes*, Dehui's compilation was based on his Tibetan teacher brTson-'grus's lectures taking place in a *renshen* 壬申 year.⁶ Within the temporal range of the Xixia regime (1038–1227), a *renshen* year could be 1092, 1152, and 1212. Given that Dehui started to hold a “State Preceptor” (曠髒 *国师) title by 1167⁷ and that the year 1092 appears too early, the *Keypoints* can be dated to 1152 or slightly later.⁸ The production of the *Notes* was probably by Dehui's immediate circle, if not by Dehui himself directly, since its epilogue contains Dehui's own accounts of his learning experience with brTson-'grus in Tsongkha (*tsow-ka* 禪禰), the northeastern area of Tibet bordering Xixia.⁹

Dunnell (2009) has briefly traced Dehui's career trajectory through his presence in the notations of different Tangut translated works, both sūtric and tantric.¹⁰ Starting out as “Juexing Dharma Preceptor” (觉行法师) in the early phase of his career, Dehui “had

⁵ See the *Keypoints* (#2526: 1a; #824: 1a).

⁶ See the *Notes* (I: 4a5–6).

⁷ See Dunnell 2009: 48.

⁸ Solonin (2015a: 428) also chooses the year 1152 based on Dehui's career year which had ranged through the reign of Renzong (1139–1193).

⁹ See the *Notes* (X: 26a1–27b4). For the Chinese translation of this passage, see Solonin 2012a: 245–246.

¹⁰ See Dunnell 2009: 47–49.

been promoted to Lanshan Juexing State Preceptor” (兰山觉行国师) by 1167, and “appears with the title of Lanshan Zhizhao State Preceptor” (兰山智昭国师) by 1184.

Dunnell further notes that “Dehui lacks all the usual marks of visiting Tibetan or Himalayan status” in his title, thus leading to the speculation that he “was a Tangut monk.” It is worthy of note that Dehui had participated in the translation of three tantric texts – two on Cakrasaṃvara and one on the Six-Teaching praxis – during his state preceptorship.¹¹ Both Cakrasaṃvara and the Six-Teaching were important building blocks integral to the *Keypoints*’s resultant vehicle.

The personality of brTson-’grus is comparatively vague. His activities can only be traced in the lineage accounts of the *Keypoints*, existing in two four-line verses:¹²

The eighth patriarch who is a Tibetan and whose clan name is called Sji-ṅə:

Clothed in the triple robe (*tricīvara, chos gos gsum*), he destroyed the three poisons (*triviṣa, dug gsum*) to clear the mind;

Adopting the four means of conversion (*saṃgraha-vastu, bsdu ba’i dngos po*), he made the vow to liberate the four modes of sentient beings (*yoni, skye gnas*);

¹¹ See Dunnell 2009: 49; c.f. Chapter One, note 54.

¹² See the *Keypoints* ((#2526: 4b2–8; #824: 4a6–b3): 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵, 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵, 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵。𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵, 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵; 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵, 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵。𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵, 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵; 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵, 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵; 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵, 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵; 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵, 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵; 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵, 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵。 (此第八本师者, 吐蕃国人, 族姓 *sjī-ṅə*。身著三衣, 摧三毒以醒心; 行四摄法, 起誓愿度四生。七部正理, 安立宗因喻三; 六聚中道, 辨别真妄二谛。说经律论, 日日精译梵典; 修戒定慧, 夜夜辑录藏文。心心合觉, 积累觉道资粮; 念念离尘, 调伏客尘烦恼。后, 作德慧之本师, 传予其真要。)

Versed in the seven treatises on Pramāṇa (*tshad ma sde bdun*), he established arguments in the epistemological trio of proposition (*pratijñā, dam bca*'), cause (*hetu, rgyu*), and simile (*dṛṣṭānta, dpe*);

Conversant with the corpus of six Mādhyamika treatises (*yuktikāya, rigs tshogs*), he distinguished the two truths of the conventional and the ultimate.

Teaching the three baskets (*tripiṭaka, sde snod gsum*) of Sūtra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma, he translates Sanskrit scriptures in the daytime;

Cultivating in the three trainings (*triśikṣā, bslab pa gsum*) of moral discipline (*śīla, tshul khrims*), concentration (*samādhi, ting nge 'dzin*), and discriminative insight (*prajñā, shes rab*), he compiled Tibetan works in the night;

According with the awakened mind, he accumulated the requisites (*sambhāra, tshogs pa*) for the path of awakening;

Disengaging with the objective sphere in every thought-moment, he tamed adventitious afflictions (*akasmāt-kleśa, blo bur nyon mongs*).

Later, he became the teacher of Dehui and transferred the quintessential instructions (*upadeśa, man ngag*) to him.

It can be learned that brTson-'grus was actively engaged in a Sanskrit-Tibetan bilingual setting with the traditional Mahāyāna trainings. Conditioned by the overarching literary

program embedded within the *Keypoints*'s lineage accounts,¹³ this short biography, however, does not cover the teacher's tantric involvement which certainly had informed the "resultant vehicle" part of the Mahāmudrā architecture.

So far we can conclude according to the *Notes*'s epilogue that brTson-'grus was a Tibetan from Tsong-kha. Listed as the only Tibetan lineage holder in the *Keypoints*, he was preceded by seven Indian patriarchs plus the founder Śākyamuni who initiated the line. The seven other patriarchs are Vimalakīrti, Saraha, Nāgārjuna, Śavaripa, Maitrīpa, Jñānakīrti, and Vāgīśvara. Only partially attested in Tibetan historiographical accounts, this line of succession contained in the *Keypoints* was perhaps more of Tangut efforts to patch together different claims to spiritual legacy.¹⁴

The *Keypoints-Notes* cluster survives only in Tangut versions in the Khara Khoto collection. Tang. 345 contains the *Keypoints* in xylography (inv. 2526)¹⁵ and manuscript (inv. 824), and the first (inv. 2858 and inv. 7163) and final (inv. 2851) volumes of the *Notes* in manuscript. A separate copy of the *Keypoints* is found in Inv. 2876, and the *Notes* in Tang.#inv. 427#3817 (vols. 1&2). Discussions in this dissertation (as well as the partial textual presentation and English translation in Appendices I & II) will be based on the *Keypoints* (A: Tang.#inv. 345#2526; B: 345#824) and the *Notes* (A: Tang.#inv. 345#2858; B: 345#7163). The *Keypoints*'s consistent adoption of the highly literary

¹³ See Chapter One (2.3.3. The *Keypoints* (#1.1) lineage).

¹⁴ See *ibid.*

¹⁵ The existence of the *Keypoints* in xylograph points to the possible royal patronage. Furthermore, Solonin (2011: 279) notes that the xylographic recension of the *Keypoints* "combines pagination both in Tangut and Chinese characters," which indicates that the carving "was probably done by a Chinese engraver."

sinitic four-six *pianwen* 骈文 (lit. parallel prose) style¹⁶ (with only a few exceptions) and its existence in xylography¹⁷ point to the possible Xixia royal patronage. On the other hand, the Tangut writing in the *Notes* leans towards the Tibetan linguistic feature in terms of syntax and grammar. Therefore, unlike the *Keypoints* which had possibly been polished and refined by the Sinitic literary style, the *Notes* is more likely a direct translation or transcription of the oral teachings which were given in Tibetan in its original pedagogical setting.

1.3. Chapter divisions

This research traces the discursive trajectory of the Mahāmudrā tradition from its origination in Indian Buddhist Tantra through a formative process nourished by Indian and Tibetan post-tantric ethos, and finally to its systematic presentation in the Tangut environment. The main body of the dissertation is divided into four chapters:

Chapter One “The Mahāmudrā in Xixia” offers an overview of the Xixia Mahāmudrā materials as well as their transmissions from the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist landscape to the Tangut Xixia, a textual and historical context into which the *Keypoints-Notes* cluster is situated.

Chapter Two “Mahāmudrā” traces the spiritual and discursive sources – to which the self-conscious Mahāmudrā teachings were indebted – from the late phase of Indian

¹⁶ The key feature of the four-six *pianwen* style is the use of couplet whose each line consists of four- and six-character components. Moreover, the phrase structure between the two lines of the couplet should match.

¹⁷ Solonin (2011: 279) notes that the xylographic recension of the *Keypoints* “combines pagination both in Tangut and Chinese characters,” which indicates that the carving “was probably done by a Chinese engraver.”

tantric Buddhism, and pictures a variety of approaches tantric Buddhists had devised and articulated as means towards the realization of Mahāmudrā in the post-tantric environment.

Chapter Three “Apratiṣṭhāna, Amanasikāra, and Buddha-nature,” devoted to the philosophical project of tantric Buddhism as reflected in the Mahāmudrā discourse, takes Maitrīpa’s Amanasikāra corpus as a point of departure to unpack the sūtric philosophical threads embedded into Mahāmudrā, and traces their roots in the Mahāyāna scholastic milieu.

Chapter Four “The *Keypoints-Notes* cluster” turns back to the Tangut context, and analyzes the twofold sūtra-tantra paradigm in the *Keypoints* and the exoteric doxography in the *Notes* against the Indo-Tibetan topography of Buddhist Tantra and scholasticism I have outlined in the second and third chapters.

Finally, the **conclusion** wraps up the intellectual history of Mahāmudrā epitomized in the *Keypoints-Notes* cluster with some methodological reflections for future studies.

In addition, the two **appendices** present the Tangut text, Chinese transliteration, and English translation of the *Keypoints*’s twofold paradigm and the *Notes*’s doxography respectively.

2. Chapter One

The Mahāmudrā in Xixia: Bibliography, History, and Myth

Overview

A geographical nexus in which multiple vectors of cultural influences intersect, the Hexi Corridor has facilitated transfers of Buddhist teachings and praxes in a complex web of historical dynamics and cross-cultural exchanges.¹⁸ As the area came under the Tangut Xixia domination from the 11th to 13th centuries, the Buddhist religion continued to impact and shape the local religio-cultural landscape of both intra- and inter-national levels.¹⁹ Integral to the Xixia national project, the newly created Tangut scripts rose to prominence in the area as an important linguistic medium for Buddhist texts. The textual treasure troves – by and large in the Tangut script and Buddhist in subject matter – across the ancient Xixia domain have offered scholars over the world a rich cache of first-hand sources to probe into the origin, nature and fabric of the Buddhist forms current within the Tangut Xixia regime (1038–1227).²⁰

¹⁸ For a multi-disciplinary and transcultural vision for Buddhism in Central Asia as a driving force for the historical and cultural processes, see Meinert 2016.

¹⁹ Solonin (2014: 158–159) notes the profound implications of Buddhism for the Tangut Xixia at both imperial and popular levels: for one thing, “adoption of Buddhism was one of the major institutional markers of the emerging imperial identity of the Tangut people,” while, for the other, “the daily routine of the Xixia population had been deeply permeated by Buddhist beliefs and activities.” He further calls for “a holistic map of Tangut Buddhism, both as part of the Buddhist universe and in its own right.”

²⁰ For an overview of the textual corpus, including the processes of its discovery and cataloguing, the translation projects involved, and its basic makeup and specific content, see Solonin 2015b.

Collections of Xixia Buddhist literature²¹ – primarily recovered from Khara Khoto, an ancient military outpost of the Tangut Xixia kingdom – reveal two major sources of inspiration, the Sinitic and the Tibetan.²² Perplexing and challenging as establishing a chronology of Sinitic and Tibetan forms of Buddhism in Xixia may appear,²³ up till the mid-Xixia period both were equally weighed in official recognition and promulgation.²⁴ Moreover, the colophonic information of Tangut Buddhist texts indicates that major Sinitic and Tibetan doctrinal and practical traditions penetrated Xixia almost simultaneously around the mid-12th century and coexisted until the end of Tangut statehood.²⁵

²¹ Here, following the convention adopted by Ruth Dunnell (1996: *xiii–xiv*), I use the words “Tangut” and “Xixia” in a manner analogous to the terms “Mongol” and “Yuan.” The ethnonym “Tangut” refers in its narrow sense “to a specific ethnic group or federation, its culture, and its language,” and broadly “to the people who lived and the things they have produced under the Xia state (1038–1227)” as well as “their descendants after the Mongolian conquest.” The term “Xixia” is “temporally and spatially specific.” I would use the terms “Xixia text” or “Xixia Mahāmudrā” to refer to texts or teachings in either Tangut or Chinese which pertain to the Xixia regime or to its immediate aftermath.

²² For a specific treatment of the Sinitic component of Xixia Buddhist literature, see Solonin 2008 and 2014; for that of the Tibetan component, see Solonin 2015a. Worthy of note is that a Chinese text does not necessarily belong to the Sinitic subject matter, but can very well be of Tibetan origin; see, for instance, Shen 2005.

²³ It was generally held that the Tanguts first resorted to Chinese canonical and doctrinal works for Buddhist sources of inspiration. A shift of focus occurred as the early 12th-century Jurchen Jin conquest of the former Sino-Tangut borderland and the Tangut occupation of the Tibetan Tsongkha area in the 1130s compelled the Tanguts to face the eastward vector of Tibetan Buddhist transmissions. See Solonin 2014: 161; 2015b: 845–848. However, as Solonin himself notes in more than one of his articles, a rising presence of Tibetan Buddhism in Xixia does not necessarily mean a cessation of the importation of Sinitic Buddhism; as a matter of fact, “the inflow of Sinitic ‘doctrinal’ texts ... into Xixia is simultaneous with the increase of Tibetan Buddhist presence;” see Solonin 2015a: 427.

²⁴ A good example is shown in the officially approved list of Buddhist scriptures in the *Tiansheng* 天盛 Law Code (1149–1169). Reflecting a growth of official needs to regulate Buddhist beliefs and cults received by the Tangut ruling elite, the *Tiansheng* list distinguishes between Chinese-Tangut and Tibetan-Tangut communities and stipulates a curriculum mandated for monastic leadership candidates in either. For an enumeration of the mandatory texts, see *TGXL*: 404–405; c.f. Solonin 2014: 162, note 9.

²⁵ See Solonin 2014: 162, note 10.

2.1. Presence of Tibetan Buddhism in the Tangut Xixia domain

Before the rise of Tanguts, the Tibetan body of tantric rituals and praxes had penetrated into the Hexi Corridor concomitant with the Tibetan military takeover of the area (late 8th to mid 9th centuries). The imported Tibetan Buddhist teachings and expressions interacted with the previously installed compendium of cultic liturgies speaking to the Sinitic Buddhist concerns for worldly welfare and state protection.²⁶ At the wake of the Tibetan administrative and military retreat as a result of the fall of the empire, the existence of the Buddhist religion shifted from the state-sponsoring model to “a dispersed model” whereby “Buddhist practice and ideology was adopted in various ways by local political rulers.”²⁷ However, the use of Tibetan as a major Buddhist written language persisted in the area until the rise of the Tanguts in the early 11th century. Through the Tibetan linguistic medium, the Mahāyoga genre of tantric practices featuring sexual and violent imagery continue to exert its influence upon a multicultural audience across cultural/ethnic boundaries in Hexi. The Dunhuang Mahāyoga *sadhāna* texts even show a dialogical engagement with the Chan meditation techniques.²⁸ The religious crossover or dialogue reflects the historical situation where cultural distinctions were blurred and religious boundaries yet to be reified.

By the time when the Tangut Xixia statehood started in the early 11th century, the Hexi area had long been a Buddhist site for Sinitic esoteric cults and rituals mingled with

²⁶ See van Schaik 2016: 65–8; Sørensen 2016.

²⁷ See van Schaik 2016: 65.

²⁸ See van Schaik & Dalton 2004.

Tibetan tantric influences.²⁹ At this point, however, the sociolinguistic prestige of Tibetan gave way to the newly created Tangut writing system, the standardization of which belonged to the broader Xixia state-building cultural projects. Buddhism as one strand of ideological sources began to be presented and promoted in Tangut through the massive translation programs. By the end of the 11th century, around 3500 scrolls of Buddhist texts had been translated from the Chinese canons.³⁰ The currently available corpus shows that the fundamental Mahāyāna sūtras and the Sinitic ritual compendiums³¹ constitute the first group of texts ever translated into Tangut under the imperial sponsorship. Besides, exchanges with Song and Central Asian (including Indian) monks enriched the esoteric/tantric ritual compendiums Tangut Buddhists had inherited from the Hexi local legacies.³²

By the turn of the 12th century, Tibetans had begun to institutionalize their own Buddhist systems and initiate international outreach to secure patronage and extend institutional networks.³³ As such, in an effort to build spiritual and political connections with the Tangut royal house, Tibetan masters – particularly those from the bKa’-brgyud

²⁹ Solonin (2014: 166–167) observes an “initial Tangut familiarity with Sinitic esoterism” based on the Tangut compilation *Yuanyin mizhou wangsheng ji* 圓因密咒往生集 and “a proven presence of both Tangut translations and Chinese originals of the esoteric scriptures from the Tangu-Song period among the Khara Khoto findings.”

³⁰ See van Schaik 2016: 75–6.

³¹ Solonin (2014: 169) concludes that “the original form of Buddhism adopted by the Tangut ruling class might well have been a form of Sinitic esoterism combined with elements of Huayan doctrine.”

³² See Dunnell 1996: 29–34.

³³ As for the historical processes of how Tibetans after a period of dark age characterized by social unrest and political fragmentation (r. 850–950) “used the evolving literature and practices of later esoteric Buddhism as iconic forms and points of reference to reconstruct institutions, found monasteries, and reorganize the political realities,” see Davidson 2005.

sect – brought to the Xixia Kingdom the cutting-edge yogic techniques of the latest Indian Buddhist Tantra and advanced Mahāyāna doctrinal developments.³⁴

Embracing a variety of Buddhist yogic transmissions as well as a range of doctrinal topics imported from Himalayan area, the Xixia Buddhist materials which were Tibetan in provenance spanned the Vajravārāhī, Cakrasaṃvara, Six-Teaching (*chos drug*) praxis, Mahāmudrā and *Lam 'bras* systems and topics, the transmission of which is traceable back to Indian tantric figures such as Maitrīpa (1007–1085), Tilopa (988–1069) and Nāropa (1016–1100).³⁵ This Tibetan component not only allows insights into the coalescent nature of the Buddhist system which was constructed under the Tangut Xixia regime; it also constitutes a window into the 12th-century Tibetan attempts to assimilate and systematize the latest Indian Buddhist thoughts and praxes through the axis of tantra. Nishida Tatsuo (1928–2012) and Evgenij Kychanov (1932–2013) – based on their cataloguing work of Tangut Buddhist texts recovered from Khara Khoto – made pioneering studies on this Tibetan component primarily in terms of the title and person identification.³⁶ Entering the 21st century, the scholarly knowledge of various Indian and Tibetan Buddhist yogic transmissions ending up in Xixia has advanced thanks to the

³⁴ Sperling (1987) compiles the later Tibetan historical sources to identify two bKa'-brgyud masters sent to serve in the Tangut court as "imperial preceptor" (*dishi* 帝师), namely gTsang-po-pa dKon-mchog-seng-ge (?–1218/1219) – disciple of Karma-pa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa's (1110–93) – and his successor Ti-shri Sangs-rgyas-ras-chen (1164/5–1236) from the 'Ba'-rom bKa'-brgyud subsect. Furthering this line of inquiries, Dunnell (1992: 102–3) comments that it was during about the 1170s that Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1139–93) had established spiritual relationships with the Tibetan bKa'-brgyud sect. From the Xixia sources in both Tangut and Chinese there could be identified several personas potentially of Tibetan origin active during the period from the mid-12th to the early-13th centuries; for details of these figures, see Dunnell 2009.

³⁵ For discussions on the transmission history of these tantric teachings and praxes which came from India to Xixia through the Tibetan medium, see Sun Bojun 2014b; also see Solonin 2015a: 429–441.

³⁶ See Nishida 1977 and 1999; Kychanov 1999; c.f. Solonin 2011: 278.

rediscovered Xixia importance evinced by the *Dacheng yaodao miji* 大乘要道密集 (*The Secret Collection of Works on the Essential Path of Mahāyāna*, “*DYM*” hereafter), a collection of Chinese translated texts of Tibetan tantric teaching compiled no earlier than the late-14th century.³⁷ Besides the esoteric practices and lineages, Kirill Solonin draws attention to the equally important exoteric philosophical compositions in the Tibetan-inspired Tangut Buddhist corpus, which he deems as integral to the Tangut efforts to “reproduce a coherent system of doctrinal learning and esoteric practice modelled after the contemporaneous Tibetan Buddhism.”³⁸

2.2. An overview of the Xixia Mahāmudrā materials

The collection of Xixia Mahāmudrā texts and fragments – which constitute a prominent segment of the Tibetan-inspired corpus – contains the otherwise overlooked teachings which refracted the contemporary Indo-Tibetan enterprise of integrating tantric praxis with sūtric philosophical articulations. The Xixia Mahāmudrā collection comprises Tangut-language texts and fragments scattered across approximately 15 inventory

³⁷ Attributed to the Sa-skyia patriarch ’Phags-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan (1235–1280) as the compiler, the *DYM* contains a substantial number of works affiliated with Tibetan Buddhist traditions other than the Sa-skyia. Approximately one third of the collection concerns the Mahāmudrā teaching transmitted by bKa’-brgyud teachers. Back in the early half of the 20th century, Lv Cheng (1896–1989) first applied the modern academic approach of historical-philological analysis to studying the *DYM*; see Lv 1942. Christopher Beckwith first introduced this collection to the English academic world in the 19080s; see Beckwith 1984. It is Chen Qingying who first noted an intimate Tangut Xixia connection in the *DYM*; see Chen 2003. Shen Weirong further builds a textual connection between the *DYM* and the Chinese translated tantric texts from the Khara Khoto collection and ascribes most of the *DYM* titles to the Xixia and Yuan translations; see Shen 2007. For more detailed examinations of the transmission history of these Tibetan tantric teachings from Tibet to Xixia based on both the Khara Khoto Buddhist texts pertaining to the Tibetan subject matter and the *DYM* Chinese translated texts, see Dunnell 2011, Sun Penghao 2012 & 2013, Sun Bojun 2014b and Solonin 2015b.

³⁸ See Solonin 2011, 2012a and 2016.

numbers originally assigned by the Institute of Oriental Studies to the Khara Khoto collection, and Chinese ones – most of which have Tangut equivalents – included in the *DYM*.³⁹

2.2.1. A collated list of Xixia Mahāmudrā titles

Presented below is a collated list of Xixia Mahāmudrā titles provided in sequence and clusters as reflected in the bibliographical organizations shared by both the Khara Khoto collection and the *DYM* (Tibetan equivalent title will be provided if located):

#1. The *Keypoints-Notes* cluster:⁴⁰

³⁹ Nishida (1999: XXXVIII–XLVI) first noticed a few titles with the term “Mahāmudrā” contained therein, among others, from the Khara Khoto collection of Tangut Buddhist texts pertaining to the Tibetan subject matter and makes preliminary studies about the content and transmission of these texts. Solonin (2011; 2012a) gives a more detailed overview of the Tangut Mahāmudrā textual tradition. Shen (2007: 288–289) identifies for certain *DYM* Chinese titles Tangut equivalents from the Khara Khoto collection. Sun (2014a) further makes a comparative study of several Mahāmudrā texts extant in both Tangut and Chinese. For a recent publication containing the transliteration, translation and *DYM* Chinese equivalent (if any) of the Tangut Mahāmudrā texts and studies of their transmission history, see Sun & Nie 2018.

⁴⁰ Tang. 345 contains the *Keypoints* in xylograph (inv. 2526) and manuscript (inv. 824), and the first (inv. 2858 and inv. 7163) and final (inv. 2851) volumes of the *Notes* in manuscript; c.f. Kychanov 1999: 582–3. A separate copy of the *Keypoints* is found in Inv. 2876 (not included in Kychanov 1999), which, however, misses several folios and is somewhat misarranged. The first two volumes of the *Notes* is also seen handwritten on the back of the xylographic text Kychanov (1999: 614) identifies as “巋毘姪姪 *次智佛請” (Tang.#inv. 427#3817). Nishida (1999: XLI–XLV) offers a preliminary study of the *Keypoints* (#35) and the *Notes* (#37) with partial structural analyses and Chinese transcriptions. Solonin (2011: 284–305; 2012a: 243–263) examines in specific the lineage, authorship and content of the *Keypoints* and compares its philosophy with counterparts in other Xixia Mahāmudrā materials. Solonin (2012a: 248–262) also provides the Tangut original and Chinese transcription and translation of the versified biographies of Śākyamuni plus eight lineage patriarchs of the *Keypoints* and compares the *Keypoints* accounts with that in the *Chengjiu bashiwushi daoizhu* 成就八十五师祷祝 (*Prayers to the Eighty-five Siddhas*) included in the *DYM*. For a critical edition and Chinese translation of the *Keypoints*, see Sun & Nie 2018: 295–335.

#1.1. *Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate* (*Phyag rgya chen po mthar thug gi gnad bsdus; “Keypoints”):

Khara Khoto: 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌 *大印究竟要集 (345#824, 345#2526, #2876),

Agent: compiled by Dehui 德慧

#1.2. *Notes on the Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate* (*Phyag rgya chen po mthar thug gi gnad bsdus kyi zin bris; “Notes”):

Khara Khoto: 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌 *大印究竟要集记 (I: 345#2858, 345#7163, 427#3817; II: 427#3817; X: 345#2851)

Agent: Dehui’s circle (if not directly by Dehui himself)⁴¹

#2. *Upadeśa on the Uncommon Meaning of Mahāmudrā in Accordance with Scriptural Instructions* (*Phyag rgya chen po thun mong ma yin pa’i don lung dang mthun pa’i man ngag; “Uncommon”):

DYM: Xinyi dashouyin bugongyi peijiao yaomen 新译大手印不共义配教要门,

Agents: compiled by Maitrīpa; narrated by Huixian 惠贤, i.e., State Preceptor

Xuanzhao 玄照; translated by Huichuang 惠幢

#3. *Guided Meditation* (𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆 *定引导):⁴²

⁴¹ The *Notes* contains in its end (X: 26a1–27b4) Dehui’s own accounts of his learning experiences with *brTson ’grus.

⁴² Tang.#inv. 297#2530, containing complete editions of the *Immediate Approach* (ff. 1–9) and the *Direct Guidance* (ff. 9–32), bears the title “𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆” on the frontispiece of the composite; c.f. Kychanov 1999: 611. In Tang.#inv. 346#7216, the *Transmission* and the *Gradual and Immediate Approaches* immediately follow the *Immediate Approach* and the *Direct Guidance*; c.f. Kychanov 1999: 561–562. I subsume all the four titles under “𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆” in my listing. For a critical edition

#3.1. *Upadeśa on the Immediate Approach to Mahāmudrā* (*Phyag rgya chen por cig car 'jug pa 'i man ngag; “Immediate Approach”):

Khara Khoto: 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌 *大手印顿入要语 (297#2530, 346#892, 346#7216)

DYM: *Xinyi dashouyin dunru yaomen* 新译大手印顿入要门, Agents: narrated by Huixian; translated by Huichuang

#3.2. *Direct Guidance on the Mahāmudrā* (*Phyag rgya chen po 'i dmar khrid; “Direct Guidance”):

Khara Khoto: 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌 *大手印赤引导 (297#2530, 346#7216)

DYM: *Dashouyin yin ding/chiyindao* 大手印引定/赤引导

#3.3. *Transmission of the Mahāmudrā Upadeśa* (*Phyag rgya chen po 'i man ngag gi brgyud pa; “Transmission”):

Khara Khoto: 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌 *大手印要语师次 (346#7216)

DYM: *Dashouyin jiatuozhi yaomen* 大手印伽陀支要门

#3.4. *Upadeśa on the Gradual and Immediate Approaches to Mahāmudrā* (*Phyag rgya chen por rim gyis 'jug pa dang cig car 'jug pa 'i man ngag; “Gradual and Immediate Approaches”):

and Chinese translation of these four titles as well as comparasons against the *DYM* counterparts, see Sun & Nie 2018: 154–205.

Khara Khoto: 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌𑖎𑖐𑖒𑖔𑖕𑖗𑖙𑖛 *大手印依次入等时入要语

(346#7216)

DYM: *Dashouyin jianru dunru yaomen* 大手印渐入顿入要门

#4. Fourteen titles plus the preceding introduction to Lazheng's 粹征 Mahāmudrā teaching by Imperial Preceptor Xuanmi 玄密 (“fourteen-title constellation”):⁴³

Khara Khoto: fourteen titles plus the preceding passage “𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌𑖎𑖐𑖒𑖔𑖕𑖗𑖙𑖛 上师曰则我师粹征云 ...” (348#2841, 477#4977)

DYM: fourteen titles plus the preceding passage “玄密帝师云吾师粹征做如是说”

#5. Four *upadeśas* including the *Newly Translated Golden Garland of Mahāmudrā* (*Xinyi dashouyin jinyingluo deng sizhong yaomen* 新译大手印金瓔珞等四种要门; “four-*upadeśa* constellation”):

#5.1. *Upadeśa on the Golden Garland* (“Golden Garland”):⁴⁴

⁴³ The fourteen titles run from the *Eight Methods of the Mahāmudrā Dhyāna* (𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌𑖎𑖐𑖒𑖔𑖕𑖗𑖙𑖛; 大手印静虑八法要门) to the *Four Mental Withdrawals towards the Mahāmudrā* (𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌𑖎𑖐𑖒𑖔𑖕𑖗𑖙𑖛; 大手印四种收心) in both Tang.#inv. 348#2841 (c.f. Kychanov 1999: 526) and the *DYM*. Tang.#inv. 447#4977 preserves an incomplete list of the fourteen-title constellation; c.f. Kychanov 1999: 565. For a critical edition and Chinese translation of these fourteen small texts as well as comparisons against the *DYM* counterparts, see Sun & Nie 2018: 211–248. For Xuanmi’s introduction to Lazheng’s Mahāmudrā teaching which precedes the first title “*Eight Methods*,” Sun & Nie wrongly identified it as the end of the *Gradual and Immediate Approaches*, probably based on the *DYM* placement of the passage between the two clusters of the *Guided Meditation* and the fourteen-title constellation.

⁴⁴ Lv Cheng (1942: X–XIII) confirms the *Nyams kyi man ngag thig le* as the Tibetan equivalent of the *Jinyingluo yaomen* in the canonical collection of translated treatises (bsTan-'gyur) and speculatively identified it as an abridged version of the *Phyag rgya chen po gser phreng* (D 2454) compiled by Maitrīpa. He also provides critical editions of both the Chinese and Tibetan texts of the *Golden Garland* and puts them in parallel for comparison; see Lv 1942: 门, 1–16. Sun Penghao (2012: 186–187) found an alternative version of the *Nyams kyi man ngag thig le* in the

DYM: Jinyingluo yaomen 金瓔珞要門 (“*Jinyingluo*”)

bsTan-'gyur: *dPal udiyanar tshogs 'khor byas pa 'i dus su rnal 'byor pa grub pa thob pa bzhi bcus rdo rje 'i mgur bzhengs pa nyams kyi man ngag thig le gser gyi phreng ba* (“*Nyams kyi man ngag thig le*”, D 2449)

#5.2. *Ritual of Offering the Gaṇacakra to Teachers of the Lineage* (**brGyud pa 'i bla ma rnams la tshogs 'khor 'bul ba 'i cho ga*; “*Offering the Gaṇacakra*”):

DYM: Shicheng dengchu feng jilunyi 師承等處奉集輪儀

#5.3. *Upadeśa on the Quintessential Meanings of Mahāmudrā* (“*Quintessential Meanings*”):⁴⁵

DYM: Dashouyin zuanji xin zhi yilei yaomen 大手印纂集心之義類要門

sGam po gsung 'bum: sNying po 'i don lnga ldan (*sGrub snying: 5b4–6b5*)

#5.4. *The Quartet Upadeśa of Ḍombi's Intention* (“*Ḍombi's Intention*”):⁴⁶

Zhi byed snga bar phyi gsum gyi skor, a collection of Zhi-byed works dating to the 13th century. Sun further notes that the version in the *Zhi byed* collection is closer to the *DYM* Chinese translated work *Jinyingluo*. While the bsTan-'gyur version of the *Nyams thig le gser gyi phreng ba* quotes Tilopa/Tailopa (though bsTan-'gyur editions differ from each other in the exact name spelling, the name remains consistent in each edition) twice, both the *Zhi byed* version and the *Jinyingluo* attribute the two quotations to two different names, Telopa/丁浪巴 and Trelopa/得吟浪巴; see the *Thig gser* A: 205a6–7; the *Thig gser* B: 172b7–173a1; the *XDJ*. For an introduction to the *Zhi byed* collection, see Martin 2006: 114.

⁴⁵ I thank Doctor Yang Jie from Renmin University of China for sharing with me his finding of the Tibetan original of the *Quintessential Meanings* in sGam-po-pa's *Collected Works* (*gsung 'bum*) as well as his comparative reading of both the Tibetan and Chinese texts.

⁴⁶ A comparative reading reveals that the Chinese edition *Nami zhenxin siju yaomen* does not completely parallel either of the two Tibetan editions found from the collected works of sGam-po-pa and rJe btsun Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1147–1216) respectively. The *DYM* edition elaborates on the four aspects of the mind, namely the threefold essence (本体), the fourfold intrinsic nature (自性), the fourfold commitment (记句, i.e., *samaya*) and the threefold deviation (迷惑). The Tibetan editions, though with minor variants, agree with each other in terms of an

DYM: Nami zhenxin siju yaomen 那弥真心四句要门

sGam po gsung 'bum: Slob dpon ḍoṃ bhi he ru ka'i dgongs pa (gNas go:
29a1–b2)

Sa skya bka' 'bum: Slob spon chen po ḍoṃ bi he ru ka'i thugs kyi man
ngag yi ge bzhi pa (*Phyag gces*, ff. 7b4–8a3)

#6. *Contemplating the Mind* (𣎵𣎵𣎵 *观心):⁴⁷

#6.1. *Upadeśa on the Mahāmudrā* (**Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag*):

Khara Khoto: 𣎵𣎵𣎵𣎵 *大手印要语 (167#6775), by Great Master

from Tibet (𣎵𣎵𣎵 *中国大师)

order different from the *DYM*'s, namely the three essences (*ngo bo gsum*), the four commitments (*dam tshig bzhi*), the three deviations (*gol sa gsum*) and the four means of settling the mind (*b[/g]zhag thabs bzhi*, i.e. 心之自性分四 in the *DYM*). Compared to the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* edition, the *sGam po gsung 'bum* edition misses several lines under the “four means of settling the mind.” The *DYM* and SK editions differ from each other in terms of the order of the four means. Nonetheless, this piece of Ḍomb[/-h]i Heruka's instruction seems to be quite well received across Tibetan Buddhist traditions during the 12th century. I thank Doctor Yang Jie from Renmin University and Sun Penghao from Harvard University for sharing with me the information regarding the Tibetan equivalent of the *Nami zhenxin siju yaomen* in the *sGam po gsung 'bum* and *Sa skya bka' 'bum* respectively.

⁴⁷ Kychanov (1999: 463–464) lists five titles under the “Contemplation of the Mind.” I adjust Kychanov's Chinese reconstructions, and English translations are all mine. In the Xixia Buddhist materials in both Tangut and Chinese, the expression “middle kingdom” (𣎵𣎵 *中国) makes frequent appearances in notations as an indicator of people's geographical origin. Both Shi Jinbo (2002: 40) and Nie Hongyin (2005: 7–8) confirm that this “middle kingdom” refers to Tibet, not China. Chen Qingying (2003: 104) has a different theory, arguing that the *zhongguo* present in the *DYM* is the self-designation applied by the Tanguts themselves. However, based on several cases that people with the “middle kingdom” appended to their title have a confirmed Tibetan origin, the term should point to Tibet. Shen Weirong (2007: 293) further speculates the “middle kingdom” might literally transcribe the Tibetan *dbus yul*. Solonin (2015a: 427, note 5) observes in the Tangut literature a distinction of geographical terms between “Tibet proper” (𣎵𣎵𣎵 *西番中国, Western Mādhyadeśa of the Bod people) and “parts of Tibet belonging to the Tangut realm” (𣎵𣎵𣎵 *弥有番, Bod belonging to the Mi[-nyag] people), the later serving as a “Tangut denomination for the Tsongkha area.”

#6.2. *Upadeśa on Aspiring for the Yoga* (*rNal 'byor 'dod pa'i man ngag):

Khara Khoto: 𐎎𐎗𐎛𐎚𐎛𐎛𐎛 *瑜伽仰渴要语 (167#6775)

#6.3. *Upadeśa on the True Meaning of the Cognitionless* (*Sems med snying don gyi man ngag):

Khara Khoto: 𐎎𐎗𐎛𐎚𐎛𐎛𐎛 *无心真义要语 (167#6775), Bla-ma Sangs-rgyas (𐎎𐎗𐎛𐎚𐎛𐎛𐎛 *明满上师)

#6.4. *Upadeśa on the Immediate Approach to the Mind-Nature of Samādhi* (*Ting nge 'dzin gyi sems nyid la cig car 'jug pa'i man ngag):

Khara Khoto: 𐎎𐎗𐎛𐎚𐎛𐎛𐎛 *静虑心性顿入要语 (167#6775), by Great Master from Tibet (𐎎𐎗𐎛𐎚𐎛𐎛𐎛 *中国大师)

#6.5. *Summarized Guidance on the Mahāmudrā* (*Phyag rgya chen po'i dmar khrid don bsdus; “Summarized Guidance”):

Khara Khoto: 𐎎𐎗𐎛𐎚𐎛𐎛𐎛 *大手印定引导略文 (167#6775, 347#875)

#7. *Zhang's Upadeśa on the Ultimate of the Profound Path of Mahāmudrā* (“Ultimate”), Ch. 8–13:⁴⁸

Khara Khoto: 𐎎𐎗𐎛𐎚𐎛𐎛𐎛 *śja-ṅə-ju-pji-rjar-pja (g.yu brag pa)

师所作《道究竟要语》(450#4806)

⁴⁸ Doctor Zeng Hanchen from from Shaanxi Normal University noticed this Tangut text and located its Tibetan original in Bla-ma Zhang's *Collected Works*. I thank her for sharing this piece of information with me.

Zhang gsung 'bum: Phyag rgya chen po lam zab mthar thug zhang gi man ngag
(*Phyag lam: 61b–74b*)

The *DYM* ordering of Chinese titles preserves in one way or another the manner in which their Tangut equivalents were put together and organized. The *DYM* listing of titles reproduces the textual order of the two Tangut clusters – the *Guided Meditation* (#3) and fourteen-title constellation (#4) – the latter immediately succeeding the former through the intermediary passage of Xuanmi's introduction to his master's teaching. Thus, we have a reason to infer that the *DYM* four-*upadeśa* cluster headed by the *Jinyingluo* (#5) also preserves the original organization of how the Tangut equivalents were wrapped into a textual composite, though they are unfortunately missing from the Khara Khoto collection.

2.2.2. A chronology inside the Xixia Mahāmudrā materials

A rough chronology in this textual corpus can be established based on the transmission lineage and colophonic information. The *Keypoints-Notes* cluster (#1) was produced during around the mid-12th century. It presents a line starting from the Buddha through a list of Indian teachers including the typical Saraha-Matrīpa line of Mahāmudrā transmission down to a Tibetan person named brTson-'grus (𐼁𐼌𐼍 *精进).⁴⁹ It was

⁴⁹ After an opening praise to the Buddha Śākyamuni (*śji-kja* 𐼁𐼌𐼍 释迦), the *Keypoints* presents a succession of eight versified biographies of Vimalakīrti (*wji-mo* 𐼁𐼌𐼍 维摩), Saraha (*sja-rjar-xa* 𐼁𐼌𐼍 𐼁𐼌𐼍), Nāgārjuna (𐼁𐼌𐼍 龙树, Klu-grub), Śavarīpa (𐼁𐼌𐼍 *山墓, Ri-khrod[-zhabs]), Maitrīpa (𐼁𐼌𐼍 *慈师), Jñānakīrti (𐼁𐼌𐼍 *智称, Ye-shes-grags-pa), Vāgīśvara (𐼁𐼌𐼍 *语主, Ngag-gi-dbang-po), brTson-'grus (𐼁𐼌𐼍 *精进). See the *Keypoints* (inv. 2526: 1b1–4b8; inv. 824: 1b1–4b3); c.f. Sun & Nie 2018: 296–301. For a survey of these figures, see Solonin 2011: 285–288; 2012a: 248–262. The succession line from Saraha, Śavarīpa to Maitrīpa is well received in Tibet as the

brTson-'grus's disciple Dehui (讷菴 德慧) who – after attending his master's Dharma lectures in 1152 – compiled the teachings into the text *Keypoints*.⁵⁰

Those having Chinese translated titles in the *DYM* – no matter whether the corresponding Tangut edition is extant or not – came up a bit later towards the end of the Tangut Xixia regime. Both the *Guided Meditation* (#3) and the four-*upadeśa* constellation (#5) clusters contain complete lineages ending with State Preceptor Xuanzhao who at the same time taught the *Uncommon* (#2) to its translator Huichuang. The short piece *Transmission* (#3.3) under the *Guided Meditation* records a lineage through the Saraha-Maitrīpa line as well. After Maitrīpa, it proceeds to the Tibetan bKa'-brgyud patriarchs Mar-pa Chos-kyi-blo-gros (1012–1097), Mi-la-ras-pa (1028/40–1111/23) and probably sGam-po-pa (1079–1153).⁵¹ Entering the Xixia domain, the line then reaches Imperial Preceptor Xuanmi 玄密, Master Dabao 大宝, and State Preceptor

common origin of the Mahāmudrā transmissions; see, for instance, the *Deb sngon* (vol. 2: 985.1–6): *rgyal ba shākya thub pa'i bstan pa 'di la phyag rgya chen po zhes lam phul du phyung bar mgo 'don mkhan bram ze chen po sa ra ha gda' ba bu | de'i lugs 'dzin pa rgya gar na rje ri khrod zhabs yab sras yin | ... yab ri khrod zhabs kyi lugs sras me tri bas gzung nas slob ma rnams phyag rgya chen po'i lam la bkod pa las dzam bu'i gling du khyab par gyur pa yin no ||*.

⁵⁰ According to the *Notes* (I: 4a5–6), brTson-'grus's Dharma lectures took place in a *renshen* 壬申 year, either 1152 or 1212. Based on Dehui's career year which had ranged through the reign of Renzong (1139–1193), Solonin (2015a: 428) dates the work to 1152. For Dehui's identity and career, see Dunnell 2009: 47–49. Moreover, Solonin (2012a: 245–246) translates the *Notes*'s colophon (X: 26a1–27b4) which describes Dehui's experience of studying with brTson-'grus in Tsong-kha (*tsow-ka* 絳河), the northeastern area of Tibet bordering the Tangut Xixia.

⁵¹ Without knowledge of the *DYM*'s Xixia import, Lv Cheng (1942: XII) identifies Lazheng 辯征 in the *DYM* lineage as Bla-ma Blo-chen, a disciple of 'Phags-pa (1235–80). Shen (2007: 282) speculates that the Chinese name *lazheng* phonetically transcribes the Tibetan *lha rje*, the title for sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen (1079–1153) who is at the same time Mi-la-ras-pa's disciple. The phonetic reconstruction of *lazheng*'s Tangut equivalent 𐞗𐞧𐞨 as *lhja-dzjij* corroborates Shen's assumption.

substitution of Xuanmi for Master Zhan 喇嘛瞻 and the omission of Xuanzhao in the end.⁵⁵

Probably having risen from the position of state preceptor (隳髡 国师), Xuanmi obtained his imperial preceptor (隳髡 帝师) title no earlier than 1194,⁵⁶ which dates this textual group produced through Xuanzhao possibly to the turn of the 13th century. The fourteen-title constellation (#4), though without any colophonic information, should be considered to belong to the same textual group in terms of transmission since it preserves Xuanmi's introduction to his master's teaching.

From among the texts and textual constellations charted above, the *Keypoints-Notes* (#1) represents an earlier layer of Xixia Mahāmudrā works produced by Dehui during the mid-12th century, while the *Uncommon* (#2), the *Guided Meditation* (#3), the fourteen-title constellation (#4) and the four-*upadeśa* constellation (#5) belong to the relatively later textual production by Xuanzhao at the turn of the 13th century. An interesting connection between these two textual groups lies in the recorded collaboration between Dehui and Xuanmi towards the last decades of the 12th century. As shown in the colophonic information from the Khara Khoto collection, Dehui had translated at least two tantric texts of the Cakrasaṃvara and Six-Teaching praxes taught by Xuanmi.⁵⁷ In

⁵⁵ See the *SFJ*.

⁵⁶ Xuanmi appears with the state preceptor title “in Renzong’s preface to an 1189 Chinese edition of the *Guan mile pusa shangsheng doushuaitian jing* 观弥勒菩萨上升兜率天经, and in a colophon by Empress Dowager Luo, his widow, to an 1194 Tangut edition of the ‘Humane King Sutra’;” see Chen 2000: 8 and Dunnell 2009: 69.

⁵⁷ Dunnell (2009: 49) lists “three tantric yoga works” Dehui had translated in collaboration with Xuanmi, which are the two Cakrasaṃvara texts (Tang.#inv. 126#2521, 128#2838) also listed in Wei Wen’s descriptive catalogue (#5, #11) and one Six-Teaching text titled 鞞禪精粹 *风气入于心 (Tang.#inv. 425#3708, **Lung sems la ’jug pa*, *The Wind entering the mind*). All the three

the notation, Xuanmi holds his imperial preceptor title and Dehui bears the title “State Preceptor Zhizhao from Mountain Lan” (蕤養毅徧曠髒 * 兰山智昭国师), which he started to hold around the 1180s.⁵⁸ This again dates the texts to the turn of the 13th century.

Besides the two textual groups produced through Dehui and Xuanzhao respectively, the composite *Contemplating the Mind* (#6) – which contains a few titles either containing “Mahāmudrā” therein or pointing to the Mahāmudrā subject matter – and the Tangut translated work *Ultimate* (#7) originally authored by Bla-ma Zhang’s (1123–1193), however, lack verifiable information for proper dating.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, the date of the *Contemplating the Mind* might be close to that of the *Guided Meditation* since the former contains a summary of the *Direct Guidance* (#3.2), while the *Ultimate* should date to no earlier than 1164, supposedly the time around which its Tibetan original was composed.

Another issue concerns the Tibetan original. Although the Tibetan originals of the *Golden Garland*, the *Dombi’s Intention* and the *Ultimate* still exist, it still remains uncertain whether all of the Tangut texts were direct translation from Tibetan, or indigenous composition based on orally received Tibetan teachings, as well as whether each of the *DYM* Chinese texts directly translated from Tibetan or Tangut. To solve the

texts bear the notations: 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌𑖎𑖐𑖑𑖓𑖕𑖗𑖙𑖛𑖜𑖞𑖠𑖡𑖣𑖤𑖥𑖦𑖧𑖨𑖩𑖪𑖫𑖬𑖭𑖮𑖯𑖰𑖱𑖲𑖳𑖴𑖵𑖶𑖷𑖸𑖹𑖺𑖻𑖼𑖽𑖾𑖿 * 中国大乘玄密帝师沙门慧称传 and 蕤養毅徧曠髒𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌𑖎𑖐𑖑𑖓𑖕𑖗𑖙𑖛𑖜𑖞𑖠𑖡𑖣𑖤𑖥𑖦𑖧𑖨𑖩𑖪𑖫𑖬𑖭𑖮𑖯𑖰𑖱𑖲𑖳𑖴𑖵𑖶𑖷𑖸𑖹𑖺𑖻𑖼𑖽𑖾𑖿 * 兰山智昭国师德慧译. Probably due to the discursive writing style of 425#3708, Kychanov (1999: 542) wrongly records for Xuanmi’s notation as 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈𑖊𑖌𑖎𑖐𑖑𑖓𑖕𑖗𑖙𑖛𑖜𑖞𑖠𑖡𑖣𑖤𑖥𑖦𑖧𑖨𑖩𑖪𑖫𑖬𑖭𑖮𑖯𑖰𑖱𑖲𑖳𑖴𑖵𑖶𑖷𑖸𑖹𑖺𑖻𑖼𑖽𑖾𑖿 * 中国大师帝师沙门慧自在 (the Great Master from Tibet, Imperial Preceptor, Śramaṇa *Prajñeśvara/Sheś-rab-dbang-po).

⁵⁸ As Dunnell mentions, Dehui started out as a “Juexing Dharma Preceptor 觉行法师,” “had been promoted to Lanshan Juexing State Preceptor” by 1167, and “appears with the title of Lanshan Zhizhao State Preceptor 兰山智昭国师” by 1184; see Dunnell 2009: 48.

⁵⁹ Dan Martin (1992: 254) dates the composition of Zhang’s *Lam zab mthar thug* to the period around 1161 to 1164. The Tangut translated work should be dated after that time.

issue requires closer historical-philological analyses of the relevant texts in the immediate temporal context of their production at both intra- and inter-corpus levels.

2.3. The transmissions of Mahāmudrā from the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist landscape to the Tangut Xixia

I chart below the three different, yet related, complete lines of Mahāmudrā transmission extracted from the Xixia materials:

<i>Keypoints</i> (#1.1)	<i>Transmission</i> (#3.3)	<i>Jinyingluo</i> (#5.1)
Śākyamuni	Samyaksambuddha	
Vimalakīrti	Bodhisattva Matiratna	
Saraha		
Nāgārjuna		
Śavaripa		
Maitrīpa		
Jñānakīrti	Bla-ma Mar-pa	Vajrapāṇi
Vāgīśvara	Mi-la-ras-pa	Bal-po Asū
brTson-'grus	Bla-ma Lha-rje	Vajraguru
Dehui	Imperial Preceptor Xuanmi	
	Master Dabao	*Jñānavajra
	State Preceptor Xuanzhao	

It is obvious that all the three lines – no matter what mythological origins each appears to have – share claims to descent from the Saraha-Maitrīpa circle, one arriving at the person of Dehui and the other two at Xuanzhao.

The Mahāmudrā transmission in Tibetan accounts

The *Blue Annals* (comp. 1476–1478) seems to be the earliest extant historiographical source to sketch a Mahāmudrā transmission initiated in India by this Saraha-Maitrīpa circle. The line started off with Saraha, the Great Brahman (*bram ze chen po*), and then reached consecutively through Śavaripa and Maitrīpa. Maitrīpa had received a multitude of disciples, including the four senior (*che ba bzhi*), seven medium (*'bring bdun*) and ten junior (*chung ba bcu*) ones. The four senior disciples include Sahajavajra (*lhan cig skyes pa'i rdo rje*), Devākaracandra (alias Śūnyatāsamādhi), Rāmapāla (*dga' ba skyong ba*) and Vajrapāṇi (*phyag na rdo rje*).⁶⁰ The *Blue Annals* further notes that the transmission of Mahāmudrā from India to Tibet had undergone three lines of translation activity during the early, the middle, and the late periods (*snga phyi bar gsum*). The early translation (*snga 'gyur*) was carried out by Nirūpa who obtained the teaching from Kāropa. The middle translation (*bar 'gyur*), branching into the upper and lower transmissions (*stod smad gnyis*), was carried out by Vajrapāṇi and the Neplese Asū respectively. The late translation (*phyi 'gyur*) was undertaken by a mNga'-ris-pa Nag-mo-she-dad, who had obtained the teaching during his encounter with the old Vajrapāṇi in India. In addition, there was Mar-pa's side transmission (*zur 'gyur*), which

⁶⁰ The *Blue Annals* (*Deb sngon*: 986.14–16; Roerich 2016: vol. 2, 840) mentions in passing an alternative quadripartite list consists of the “four heart-disciples” (*thugs kyi sras bzhi*) Kāropa, Vajrapāṇi, Mar-pa and the Neplese Śrīlabharo.

entered Tibet slightly earlier than these three transmission lines. This side transmission actually was initiated by Atiśa (*jo bo chen po rje lha gcig*), who allegedly studied the *Uttaratantra* treatises and the *dohās* with Maitrīpa. Temporally mediating between Mar-pa’s side transmission and Nirūpa’s early transmission was Paṇḍita Vairocanarakṣita, who is said to have translated Saraha’s “Three Cycles of *Dohā*” (*do hā skor gsum*) and received Bla-ma Zhang as his disciple.⁶¹

In Tibetan Buddhism, Mahāmudrā is particularly associated with the bKa’-brgyud sect. However, despite the possible extension of Mar-pa’s side transmission into the bKa’-brgyud curriculum, the early bKa’-brgyud accounts were vague with regard to the Saraha-Maitrīpa branch of Mahāmudrā transmission in general.⁶² Rather, the orthodox lineage accounts tended to valorize the Six-Teaching (*nāro chos drug*) transmission in combination with the Mahāmudrā content as its primary experiential referent. The normative bKa’-brgyud (literally “Descents of the Teaching”) succession runs from Vajradhāra through Tilopa, Nāropa, Mar-pa, Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa, and then branches into subsectarian descents.⁶³ Nonetheless, since sGam-po-pa – the founding

⁶¹ See the *Deb sngon*: 985–990 (Roerich 2016: vol. 2, 839–844). That Vairocana taught Saraha’s *Dohā* to Zhang is verified in Zhang’s own lineage record of the multiple transmissions he received (*brGyud pa sna tshogs*); see the *brGyud sna*: 96b2–5; c.f. Yamamoto 2012: 359.

⁶² A complete line of “Mar-pa’s side transmission” continuing through Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa is seen in the eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje’s (1507–1554) introduction to the *Dwags brgyud grub pa’i shing rta* where he delineates two lineages serving as the sources of inspiration for Madhyamaka teachings within the bKa’-brgyud – one from Nāropa and the other from Maitrīpa. The Nāropa lineage, passing through Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa, is certainly that of the Six-Teaching praxes. The Maitrīpa one branched into 1) the *mantra* Madhyamaka, 2) the *sūtra* Madhyamaka, and 3) the *alikākāra-cittamātra* Madhyamaka. While the third one constitutes what the *Blue Annals* termed as the early, middle and late transmissions of Mahāmudrā, the first and second ones belong in their entirety to Mar-pa and Mi-la-ras-pa; see the *Dwags shing*: 4b5–6b3; c.f. Brunnhölzl 2004: 51–52; Seyfor Ruegg 2010: 328–332.

⁶³ For the early accounts about the orthodox bKa’-brgyud succession of the six teachers from Vajradhāra through sGam-po-pa, see, for instance, Zhang brTson-’grus-grags-pa’s two prayers to the bKa’-brgyud teachers, the *bKa’ brgyud kyi gsol ’debs dang po* (*gSol skor*: 4b3–5b2) and the

father of the bKa'-brgyud sect who popularized Mahāmudrā as a rubric equally rooted in sūtra as in tantra – the Mahāmudrā taught within the bKa'-brgyud circles has extended beyond the mere tantric approach confined by this canonical Six-Teaching transmission. A direct perception of Mahāmudrā bypassing the procedures of tantric initiation (*dbang bskur*) is considered possible through the master's pointing-out instruction (*ngo sprod*) even for disciples well below the stage of seeing (*mtshong lam*) or the first *bodhisattva* level (*sa dang po*).⁶⁴

Around the 15th century, Maitrīpa's Mahāmudrā legacy was reinforced along the bKa'-brgyud lines (including gZhon-nu-dpal's *Blue Annals* and Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje's works), probably as a response to criticisms leveled against the Mahāmudrā beyond the tantric context initially advocated by early patriarchs such as sGam-po-pa and Bla-ma

bKa' brgyud kyi gsol 'debs gnyis pa (*gSol skor*: 5b2–6a4); c.f. Yamamoto 2012: 84–85. Elsewhere in his *brGyud pa sna tshogs*, Zhang ascribes this line of succession to the Mahāmudrā and Six-Teaching (*phyag rgya chen po dang nā ro 'i chos drug*) transmission he received; see the *brGyud sna*: 94b4–95a1. Worthy of note is that Zhang lists in his *brGyud pa sna tshogs* more than one transmission either containing “Mahāmudrā” in the title or related to it, which – besides the Six-Teaching Mahāmudrā transmission – are the Sahaja (*lhan cig skyes pa*) transmission which includes Cakrasaṃvara's consort *Jñānaḍākiṇī (*bcom ldan 'das dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi yum ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma*), Maitrīpa (*a wa dhū ti pa*), Vajrāsana (*rdo rje gdan pa*) and Abhayākara-gupta, the Instantaneous Mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya chen po thog babs*) transmission which includes Bodhisattva Matiratna, Śavaripa and Vajrapāṇi, and the *Dohā* Commentary (*do hā'i 'grel*) transmission which includes Vajradhāra (*rdo rje 'chang*), Saraha, Śavaripa (*ri khrod dbang phyug sa ra ha*), Maitrīpa (*mai tri pa*) and Vairocana-vajra; see the *brGyud sna*; c.f. Yamamoto 2012: 356–360. The *Dohā* Commentary line – nested within a complex of tangled transmissions not particularly bKa'-brgyud-pa in affiliation – is closest to the Mahāmudrā transmission sketched out in the *Blue Annals* in that both pass through the Saraha-Maitrīpa circle and contain a “Vairocana” transmitting the teaching to Zhang. Through tracing Zhang's spiritual tree based on his lineage accounts, Yamamoto (2012: 79–137) describes and discusses the processes within the bKa'-brgyud institution whereby “the impossible complexity of religious influence is streamlined into a more manageable model of inheritance,” and the Six-Teaching line which started off as “a solitary lineage” had gained “hegemonic status through appropriation and consolidation at the material and symbolic/ideological levels, and through institutionalization at the social level.”

⁶⁴ See Jackson 1994: 9–38; Mathes 2006: 201–204.

Zhang.⁶⁵ It remains in scholarly debate whether it was a genuine rediscovery of Maitrīpa’s importance in sGam-po-pa’s non-tantric Mahāmudrā teaching or merely a retroactive projection of later bKa’-brgyud teachers’ outlook back onto their predecessors.⁶⁶ In this vein, the Xixia Mahāmudrā collection of Tangut and Chinese texts sheds new light on the controversy in that it presents early cases of Mahāmudrā doctrinal articulations with lineages traceable to the Saraha-Maitrīpa circle.

2.3.1. The *Transmission* (#3.3) lineage

Among the three Mahāmudrā lineages extracted from the Xixia materials, the *Transmission* lineage in its Indo-Tibetan part parallels what was meant by the *Blue Annals* as “Mar-pa’s side transmission.” Its extension from Mar-pa down through Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa is shown in Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje’s bKa’-brgyud Madhyamaka lineage as belonging to the Maitrīpa-Marpa line.⁶⁷ Moreover, the *Uncommon* (#2) allegedly compiled by Maitrīpa and belonging to the same Xuanzhao-produced textual group as the *Transmission* (#3.3) – though remaining silent as regards descent from any bKa’-brgyud patriarchs – contains a threefold path structure into the provisional meaning (*fangbian yi* 方便义, *drang don/neyārtha*) of *pāramitā*, the definitive meaning (*jueding yi*

⁶⁵ See Jackson 1994: 82–3; Zhang 2016: 598–599.

⁶⁶ Klaus-Dieter Mathes has written a series of articles (e.g. 2006 and 2007) to argue for the Indian origin for the bKa’-brgyud not-specifically-tantric Mahāmudrā by building a doctrinal connection with the Amanasikāra cycle composed by Maitrīpa and his disciples. Kragh (2015: 73–78) – as much as he acknowledges the doctrinal resemblance – denies the historical connection between sGam-po-pa and Maitrīpa. He points out a missing link to Mathes’s line by arguing that sGam-po-pa as an innovator had not so much inherited from Maitrīpa, which is evidenced by the absence of the latter in the former’s works.

⁶⁷ C.f. note 62.

决定义, *nges don/nītārtha*) of tantra, and the quintessential meaning (*zhenxin yi* 真心义, *snying po 'i don*) of Mahāmudrā.⁶⁸ This is in line with sGam-po-pa's threefold path division into the sūtric, the tantric and the Mahāmudrā modes.⁶⁹

2.3.2. The *Jinyingluo* (#5.1) lineage

The *Jinyingluo* lineage represents another line recorded in the *Blue Annals*.

Vajrapāṇi is listed by the *Blue Annals* as one of the “four senior disciples” of Maitrīpa, and his disciple the Nepalese Asū (*bal po skye med*) had received gYor-po rLung-ston rDo-rje-bla-ma (i.e. Vajraguru in the *Jinyingluo* lineage) as a disciple when Asū was

⁶⁸ See the *XDBP*. The *Uncommon*, explicitly attributed to Maitrīpa, embeds commentarial explications within the verse lines. Though not clearly specified, it should be the verses that Maitrīpa is attributed to, and the commentary should be authored by the later hands.

⁶⁹ See Jackson 1994: 24–28. In his reply to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa's inquiries, sGam-po-pa laid out three Buddhist paths, namely the *lakṣana* mode of the *pāramitā* taking reasoning for its path, the secret *mantra* mode of the generation and perfection stages taking beneficial blessing for its path, and the *sahaja* (i.e. Mahāmudrā) mode of the luminosity taking direct perception for its path; see the *Dus zhus* (62b2–4): *lam rnam pa gsum du 'gro gsung ngo | rjes dpag lam du byed pa dang | byin brlabs lam du byed pa dang | mngon sum lam du byed pa gsum yin gsung | mtshan nyid lam pha rol tu phyin pa ni rjes dpag lam du byed pa bya ba yin | theg pa chen po gsang sngags ni bskyed rdzogs gnyis la brten nas byin brlabs lam du byed pa yin | mngon sum lam du byed pa ni lhan cig skyes pa 'od gsal bya ba yin gsung*. In the immediately following dialogical thread, sGam-po-pa further comments that by the *pāramitā* mode (*pha rol tu phyin pa 'i lugs*) the experiential realization (*rtogs pa*) arises through the trio of *bodhicitta* (*byang chub kyi sems*), illusion-like (*rgyu ma lta bu*) and emptiness (*stong pa*), while by the *mantra* mode (*sngags kyi lugs*) the realization arises through the trio of the body as deity (*lus lha*), the speech as mantric recitation (*ngag bzlas pa*) and the mind as *lakṣaṇa* (*yid chos nyid*). As for his own mode (i.e. the Mahāmudrā), sGam-po-pa does not specify within the same dialogical thread what philosophy and practice it entails. But he mentions that, unlike the previous two, the third mode guarantees that one never regresses – even those of the low faculty are born as gods. See the *Dus zhus* (64a2–5): *pha rol tu phyin pa 'i lugs kyi | byang chub kyi sems dang | sgyu ma lta bu dang | stong pa gsum la brten nas rtogs pa rgyud la 'khrungs | sngags kyi lugs kyi lus lha | ngag bzlas pa | yid chos nyid gsum la brten nas rtogs pa rgyud la 'khrungs | mi rtogs na 'tshang mi rgya | yu bu 'i lugs kyis | chos kyi 'khyer lugs 'dis | yar la 'gro ba las mar la mi 'gro ba yin | dbang po rab 'tshang rgya ba yin | 'bring 'phags pa 'i gnas lngar skye ba yin | tha ma yang lhar skye gsung |.*

residing in Tibet.⁷⁰ This line is associated with the Zhi-byed tradition attributed to Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas (d. 1117) in that the Zhi-byed edition of the *Nyams kyi man ngag thig le* reveals a closer proximity to its *DYM* Chinese equivalent *Jinyingluo* than the bsTan-'gyur edition.⁷¹ According to the *Blue Annals*, Pha-dam-pa – one of the “ten junior disciples” of Maitrīpa – and Asū had overlapped in their sojourns in Tibet, during which both were visited by a rMa-sgom Chos-kyi-shes-rab.⁷²

2.3.3. The *Keypoints* (#1.1) lineage

Now, we are left with the last one of the three lineages present in the Xixia Mahāmudrā materials which is the primary object of the dissertation research. The *Keypoints* presents a line of eight patriarchs after Śākyamuni which traces a descending arc of spiritual accomplishments, possibly intent on a Buddhist eschatology. Below is a chart presenting the spiritual status assigned by the *Keypoints*'s accounts to Śākyamuni and each of the patriarchs:⁷³

⁷⁰ See the *Deb sngon*: 1005.6–7, 1007.14 (Roerich 2016: vol. 2, 860, 862). Sun Penghao (2012: 186) identifies gYor-po rLung-ston with Vajraguru

⁷¹ C.f. note 44. Sun Penghao (2012: 186) speculates that the *Nyams kyi man ngag thig le* included in the *Zhi byed snga bar phyi gsum gyi skor* might be the edition Pha-dam-pa acquired directly from his teacher Maitrīpa. For a bibliographical study of the anthologies of Buddhist tantric verse attributed to Pha-dam-pa, see Schaeffer 2007.

⁷² See Sun 2012: 186–187. Sun Penghao identifies Kṛṣṇa the Junior (*nag po chung*) listed under Maitrīpa's “ten junior disciples” with Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas and further notes the connection of this transmission with Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas's Zhi-byed tradition.

⁷³ The spiritual hierarchy goes from the tenth *bhūmi* of the first patriarch, consecutively through the eighth, sixth, fourth, second and first *bhūmis* of the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth patriarchs respectively, up to the *prayoga* and *sambhāra* stages of the seventh and eighth patriarchs; see the *Keypoints* (inv. 2526: 1b1–4b8; inv. 824: 1b1–4b3). The *Daśabhūmikasūtra* constitutes a systematic and methodical presentation of the ten *bodhisattva bhūmis*, correlating each with seminal doctrines of Buddhism; see the *DBh*.

Name	Spiritual Status
Śākyamuni	Buddha
Vimalakīrti	10 th <i>bhūmi</i> Dharmameghā (<i>chos kyi sprin</i>), 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *十地法云
Saraha	8 th <i>bhūmi</i> Acalā (<i>mi g.yo ba</i>), 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *八地不动
Nāgārjuna	6 th <i>bhūmi</i> Abhimukhī (<i>mngon du 'gyur ba</i>), 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *六地现前
Śavarīpa	4 th <i>bhūmi</i> Arcismaṭī (<i>'od 'phro ba</i>), 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *四地焰慧
Maitrīpa	2 nd <i>bhūmi</i> Vimalā (<i>dri ma med pa</i>), 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *二地离垢
Jñānakīrti	1 st <i>bhūmi</i> Darśanamārga (<i>mthong lam</i>), 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *初地见道
Vāgīśvara	Prayoga-mārga: the <i>ūṣma</i> (<i>drod</i>), <i>mūrdha</i> (<i>rtse</i>) and <i>kṣānti</i> (<i>bzod</i>) stages, 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *暖顶忍位
brTson-'grus	Sambhāra-mārga (<i>tshogs lam</i>), 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *觉道资粮

The *Keypoints* lineage departs from the other two Xixia Mahāmudrā transmissions by its generally – thought not entirely – “sūtric” or exoteric tone. Transmissions oriented towards exoteric philosophy or non-tantric praxes tend to locate their origin in Śākyamuni – the historical, or so-called emanation body (*sprul sku*), Buddha – but this is quite rare in Buddhist yogic lineage accounts. Right after Śākyamuni, the curious placement of the mythological figure Vimalakīrti as the first patriarch further adds to the sūtric tone in the lineage presentation.⁷⁴ Moreover, the “Nāgārjuna” inserted

⁷⁴ Vimalakīrti does not gain as wide a popularity in Tibetan Buddhism as in the Sinitic Buddhist milieu. In Xixia, however, the figure seems to gain a certain degree of valence. Solonin (2012: 251) notes another Tangut case of Vimalakīrti’s presence: the composite “*Instructions on the Dhyāna Meditation*” (𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *禅修要论, **bSam gtan gyi gdams ngag*; Tang.#inv. 291#4824) which consists of several short titles is attributed to the collective composition of Vimalakīrti (*wji-mo-khjij* 𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 维摩诘) and Avalokiteśvara (𑖀𑖂𑖄𑖆𑖈 *观音). For a detailed study of this

between Saraha and Śavaripa might be read as the tantric “Nāgārjuna” who had studied with Saraha and was at the same time a *Guhyasamāja* expert.⁷⁵ However, the versified biography accorded to Nāgārjuna in the *Keypoints* only presents the master’s activities as a Madhyamaka philosopher, while remaining silent in regards to the yogic episodes later accrued in the tantric context.⁷⁶

Appearing like a patchwork of discrete personalities nested within a complex of interconnected transmissions, the patriarch line does, however, find itself based in the Tibetan tantric historiographical tradition. The succession from Saraha through Nāgārjuna, Śavaripa, and Maitrīpa in the *Keypoints* is paralleled by Tāranātha’s (1575–1634) presentation of the Mahāmudrā lineage as one of the seven yogic transmissions in the *bKa’ babs bdun ldan*. According to Tāranātha, the Mahāmudrā transmission started with Rāhula (i.e. Saraha) and then proceeds through Nāgārjuna to Śavaripa. Śavaripa first received Lūyipa as his disciple and later Maitrīpa.⁷⁷

“*Instructions on the Dhyāna Meditation*,” see Yuan (2016) which further confirms that the work was transmitted by Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas.

⁷⁵ For a tantric account (mixing with the “sūtric” episodes) of the life and Buddhist activities of Nāgārjuna as one of the eighty-four Indian tantric Siddhas, see the *Grub lo*: 49–54 (Robinson 2014: 75–80). For a general survey of the Siddha Nāgārjuna, see Dowman 1986: 112–122.

⁷⁶ The mixed accounts combining the lives of the 2nd-century Madhyamaka philosopher Ārya Nāgārjuna and the 9th-century *Guhyasamāja* expert Ācārya Nāgārjuna are in line with the phenomena of name appropriation inside the Buddhist tantric circles, which reflects a tendency to project identities of tantric masters back to those of earlier Madhyamaka scholars; see Seyfort Rugg 1981: 105–6. For an early biographical account of Nāgārjuna which retains only the “sūtric” episodes, see Kumārajīva’s (344–409/413) translation titled “*A Biography of Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna*” (*Longshu pusa zhuan* 龙树菩萨传, T no. 2047, vol. 50). For a survey of Nāgārjuna’s biographical accounts in Tibetan and Chinese sources, see Walleser 1922.

⁷⁷ See the *bKa’ bdun*: 181b5–189b6 (Templeman 1983: 2–14).

dbang Blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho's (1617–1682) recorded list of teachings (*thob yig*) *Gaṅgā'i chu rgyun*, Vāgīśvara and Abhayakīrti had acted as the nexus where multiple Indian lineages of Cakrasaṃvara teachings converged and further made their ways into Tibet.⁸² Among the nine lines of lineage from the Lūpa tradition of the Sixty-two Deities Cakrasaṃvara *maṅḍala* praxis which purifies the egg-born proclivity (*rnal 'byor dbang phyug lu hi pas sbyang gzhi sgong skyed sbyong byed ltar legs par 'gal ba'i he ru ka'i rigs dpal 'khor lo sdom pa lha drug cu rtsa gnyis kyi ris bris kyi dkyil 'khor chen po*), the Sa-skyā line (*sa lugs*) and Mar-pa line (*mar lugs*) overlap in terms of lineage segment from the originator Vajradhāra through the Pham-thing brothers (*pham thing sku mched*) Vāgīśvara and Abhayakīrti. Both lines in their shared part reproduce the Saraha-Nāgārjuna-Śavaripa succession between Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi and Lūpa.⁸³ In this way, our *Keypoints* lineage is echoed by at least one branch of the Cakrasaṃvara transmissions mediated by the Pham-thing family from India through Tibet.

To summarize, both the *Transmission* and the *Jinyingluo* lineages are attested by later Tibetan historiographical accounts about Mahāmudrā, and thus belong to an Indo-Tibetan continuum of the constructed Buddhist yogic past as based upon historical realities – at least as understood by Tibetans of the time. Unlike these two, the *Keypoints*

12a1. The Tibetan bsTan-'gyur preserves fives of his translated works in collaboration with Tibetan translators. Vāgīśvara translated Kuśalipada's *dPal 'khor lo sdom pa'i snying po'i de kho na nyid bsdu pa* (D 1505) and dGe-ba'i-mgon-po's *dPal 'khor lo sdom pa'i gnyis su med pa'i bsam gtan gyi man ngag rnal 'byor gyi gtum mo* (D 1508) in collaboration with Mar-pa-do-pa, and the *rDo rje phag mo'i mdor bsdu pa'i bstod pa* (D 1595), the *Seng ge sgra'i gzungs* (D 704) and the *Seng ge sgras dam bcas pa'i gzungs* (D 912) with Klog-skyā Lotsāba, and his own ritual manual *gSang ba 'dus pa'i dbang bskur ba'i cho ga mdor bsdu pa* (D1887) was translated by Mar-pa-do-pa (c.f. Wei 2013: 71).

⁸² See the *Zab thob*: 247–260; c.f. Wei 2013: 28–31, 70.

⁸³ See the *Zab thob*: 247–248, 251. For an earlier lineage presentation of the Lūpa Cakrasaṃvara tradition by Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, see the *bDe lo*.

lineage represents an ahistorical linking of diverse selected lineal segments into moments of a “structured totality” through a distinctively Xixia recognition and imagination.⁸⁴ The transmission presented by the *Keypoints*, primarily based on the classical Saraha-Maitrīpa Mahāmudrā line, appropriates a Cakrasaṃvara succession of the Lūipa tradition. The addition of the personality Jñānakīrti – unseen elsewhere in other Mahāmudrā lineages – is probably due to considerations of both the teacher’s expertise in the Mahāmudrā thoughts and his potential overlap with Maitrīpa, which again reinforces the constructed nature of the lineage. Meanwhile, in situating the succession of eight patriarchs into a spiritual hierarchy structured by both the Five Paths (*pañca-mārga, lam lnga*) and Ten Grounds (*daśa-bhūmi, sa bcu*) schemes, the lineage accounts do not so much simply paraphrase the pre-existing legends relating the masters’ religious activities and spiritual accomplishments as give expressions to a structured path of Buddhist soteriology across both the sūtric and tantric registers.

2.4. Concluding remarks

The *Keypoints* is an indigenous Tangut work which represents a continuation of the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist current of blending sūtric and tantric paths under the Mahāmudrā rubric. More of a collage than a homogeneous line of reality, the transmission presented by the work patched together different Indian and Tibetan claims to spiritual legacy and religious authority – be they historically based or introspectively

⁸⁴ See Yamamoto’s (2012: 24–28, 90–96) methodological discussions on Bla-ma Zhang’s *hegemony*-building project through the case of the lineage as a “discursive formation.”

projected. The *Keypoints* lineage further implies its having drawn multiple sources of inspiration from the Mahāmudrā discursive and contemplative pool.

To further tackle the semantic and doctrinal terrain the *Keypoints* has laid out for Buddhist philosophy and praxis to unfold, it entails unpacking the work's Indian and Tibetan sources of inspiration through a close philological reading of the *Keypoints-Notes* cluster against relevant Indian and Tibetan works. Before carrying on this task, I will first go back to the Indian religio-historical background where the Mahāmudrā discourse arose from within the Buddhist tantric circles and a tantric need for philosophical reengagement was felt.

3. Chapter Two

Mahāmudrā: Its root in Buddhist Tantra and beyond

Overview

Although Mahāmudrā as a doxographic rubric for signifying a distinct system of teachings is largely a product of Tibetan efforts, the term itself is Indian in origin and figures with increasing prominence in the evolution of Indian Buddhist Tantra. To trace *mahāmudrā* back through a chronology of Buddhist Tantra, one observes in it a semantic line from physical indicator towards interiorization and gnostication coupled with an increasingly soteriological and ontological valence. Specifically, *mahāmudrā* has undergone semantic shifts from a ritual hand-gesture in earlier Buddhist tantric works, through one “sealing” process of spiritual attainments in the more inward-oriented Yogāniruttara cycle of Mahāyoga- and Yoginī-tantras, to an index of ultimacy featured by the luminous and empty nature of the mind in the more gnostic siddha writings such as the *dohā*.⁸⁵ Towards the final phase of Indian Buddhist Tantra, the usage of *mahāmudrā* started to evoke philosophical themes resonating Mahāyāna scholasticism.⁸⁶

The 12th century is a period when Tibetans were actively shaping the contour of Mahāmudrā in terms of its definition, literature, and transmission in relation to the Indian sources. sGam-po-pa (1079–1153), usually acknowledged as the founder of the bKa’-

⁸⁵ See Jackson 2005: 5596–7; 2011: 288–289. These two articles – the latter as an expansion of the former – constitute so far a reliable survey of the concept of *mahāmudrā* in terms of its semantic evolution in India and further articulation in Tibet.

⁸⁶ This echoes the 10th-century Indian background of the Siddha subculture merging into the orthodox institution, whereby attempts were made to philosophize the tantra-rooted Mahāmudrā. See Kragh 2015: 69–70.

brgyud sect, presents Mahāmudrā approaches as having three possible doxographic positions: rooted in sūtra, in tantra, and entirely beyond both of these conventional categories.⁸⁷ In fact, the position of Mahāmudrā varies in sGam-po-pa’s diverse doctrinal writings. In one piece of his assembly teachings (*tshogs chos*) included in the *Tshogs chos legs mdzes ma*, sGam-po-pa places Mahāmudrā – along with Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) – at the pinnacle of the perfection-phase praxis of Resultant Vehicle (*’bras bu’i theg pa*, i.e., Mantrayāna).⁸⁸ Elsewhere in his reply to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa’s inquiries, sGam-po-pa advocates a *sahaja* mode of Mahāmudrā beyond both the sūtric and tantric mode of praxis.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, sGam-po-pa’s *Instructions on Mahāmudrā* (i.e., *Phyag chen gyi khrid yig*) appears to be relatively consistent in terms of how he understands the scope of *mahāmudrā* regardless of its doxographic position. He draws on the contemplative and doctrinal resources of both sūtra and tantra to map out the path to realizing the natural mind (*tha mal gyi shes pa*) or the yoga with the co-emergent (*lhan cig skyes sbyor*, **sahajayoga*), the spiritual status he considers as the goal of Mahāmudrā.⁹⁰ This multi-faceted picture of Mahāmudrā was systematized by later bKa’-brgyud teachers into more coherent presentations. A classical example is in Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha’-yas’s (1813–1899) *Shes bya kun khyab mdzod* whereby Mahāmudrā is

⁸⁷ See Jackson 1994: 14–28.

⁸⁸ See the *Tshogs legs* (49a5–b2): *gsang sngags ’bras bu’i theg pa de ston | de la gnyis | bskyed pa’i rim pa’i gdams ngag dang rdzogs pa’i rim pa’i gdams ngag gnyis yod pa las | ’dir bskyed rim mi ston | rdzogs pa’i rim pa’i gdams ngag ston | de la gnyis | rdzogs pa chen po’i man ngag dang phyag rgya chen po’i man ngag gnyis yod pa las |*.

⁸⁹ See the *Dus zhus* (62b2–4; 64a2–5); c.f. Chapter One, note 51. As for the sūtric Mahāmudrā, it is not so much a remarkable witness in sGam-po-pa’s own teaching as later bKa’-brgyud teachers’ reading back into his works. However, Jackson (1994: 17–24) does find certain sūtric parallels to Mahāmudrā in sGam-po-pa’s “non-tantric” instructions.

⁹⁰ For a synopsis of sGam-po-pa’s Mahāmudrā manuals, see Kragh 2015: 396–481.

divided threefold into the *sūtra*, *mantra*, and essence modes (*mdo sngags snying po'i lugs*).⁹¹

As much as we should be cautious against reading later interpretations and taxonomy back into the earlier layers of doctrinal composition, Kong-sprul's classification scheme indeed reveals three major strands of inspiration bKa'-brgyud teachers had drawn from the India Buddhist tantric and siddha discourses in crafting their Mahāmudrā complex. In short, the bKa'-brgyud Mahāmudrā topography is primarily made up of the tantric mode represented by the Six-Teaching (*ṣaḍdharma, chos drug*) praxis traceable to Tilopa (988–1069), the sūtric mode articulated by the Sahajayoga (*lhan cig skyes sbyor*) praxis of four *yogas* (*rnal 'byor bzhi*) traceable to Atiśa (982–1054), and the essence mode found in the *dohā* and *Amanasikāra* (*yi la mi byed pa*) cycles traceable to the Saraha-Maitrīpa circle. Woven together by the unifying thread of Mahāmudrā, all three interconnected lines combined to make the pinnacle of the bKa'-brgyud curriculum.

Our mid-12th century Tangut work *Keypoints* constitutes a continuation of this Tibetan process of constructing a Buddhist system of thoughts and practices defined by the pinnacle position of Mahāmudrā, though laden with a Tangut interpretative agency. In this chapter, I trace the spiritual and discursive sources – to which the self-conscious Mahāmudrā teachings were indebted – from the late phase of Indian tantric Buddhism. The aim is to present a picture composed of partially overlapping strands available to the 12th-century Buddhists across the Himalayan range and the Hexi Corridor, from which

⁹¹ See the *Shes kun* (381, vol. 3); c.f. Mathes 2015: IX–X.

the *Keypoints* drew sources of inspiration as building blocks for the Mahāmudrā edifice of Buddhist thoughts and praxes.

3.1. Indian Buddhist Tantra: scripture, praxis, and taxonomy

Like the rDzogs-chen (Great Perfection), the Mahāmudrā discourse originated from a post-tantric thread focusing on the naturalness and spontaneity abstracted from the still evolving tantric matrices.⁹² In spite of their common grounds in Buddhist post-Tantra, the rDzogs-chen and the Mahāmudrā took on their respective discursive forms and structures from disparate tantric contemplative venues. While the rDzogs-chen derived from the *Guhyagarbha* environment in which a higher development flowed out of the Mahāyoga “perfection phase” praxis as a self-conscious mode of contemplation, the Mahāmudrā was shaped by the *sahaja* (co-emergent) discourse which emerged out of – and simultaneously claimed to transcend – the experience of sexual yoga as described and prescribed in the *Hevajra* cycle. Moreover, both systems made their respective presence in Tibet through different pathways. Probably due to the possible chronological difference of their Indian provenances, the rDzogs-chen grew as an integral part of the rNying-ma (ancient translation) traditions since the final decades of the sNga-dar (Earlier Dissemination) period (from the 7th through mid-9th centuries). In contrast, the

⁹² Here I follow Germano’s unpublished manuscripts *Mysticism and Rhetoric in the Great Perfection (rDzogschen)* (2016) and *Prophetic Histories of Buddhas, Dākinīs, and Saints in Tibet* (2018) in their usage of the term “post-Tantra/tantric” to describing this new phenomenon emerging out of Indian Buddhist Tantra. The term “post,” according to Germano (2018: 34), “suggests these movements were positioned as a critique of tantra, and thus engaged in a specific relationship with tantra that is not adequately explained either through the model of belonging to tantra or laying wholly outside of it.”

Mahāmudrā came to be received by the gSar-ma (new translation) Tibetans only at the beginning of the Phyi-dar (later dissemination) phase (from the early 11th century).

The current research gears the focus towards the Mahāmudrā strand which emerged and flourished slightly later than its post-tantric doppelganger, the rDzogs-chen. Therefore, in what follows I limit my accounts of Indian Buddhist Tantra to the scope of what were received and embraced by the gSar-ma traditions, that is, to focus on the evolving lines leading up to the Mahāmudrā movements.

3.1.1. “Tantric/esoteric Buddhism:” a troubled scholarly category

As a totalizing response of modern scholarship to Buddhist ritualistic tendency and its hermeneutics, the term “tantric/esoteric Buddhism” as part of the standard vocabulary of religious studies is heavily invested with the dialectics between traditional self-expression and modern scholarly construct. Defying any clearly bounded definitions anchored in a singular fixed reality, the category embraces a complex body of doctrines and practices claimed by divergent – yet partly overlapping – lines of development from India across Asia. Nonetheless, it is commonly acknowledged that what distinguishes Buddhist Tantra⁹³ or esotericism from non-tantric or exoteric Mahāyāna lies in the former’s predominant claim to ritual and yogic implementations as crucial means towards the ultimate goal of awakening.

⁹³ The term *tantra* or “tantric” was traditionally used as a textual category for Buddhist scriptures. In modern scholarship – particularly in the field of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist studies – it has been an established norm to use “tantra” or “tantric” to refer to a type of discourse grounded by a vast and varied corpus of tantric texts as well as the associated praxes. I will follow this conventional usage of “tantra” or “tantric” adopted in academia. In addition, I use the capitalized “Tantra” to refer to a systematic presentation of doctrine and praxis, which has sometimes been otherwise termed as “mantric” or by the word *mantra* in traditional discourses.

Modern accounts of Buddhist Tantra or esotericism – as a discipline largely formed within the Western intellectual tradition – are structured by the interpretative models scholars have subscribed to.⁹⁴ Christian Wedemeyer in his *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism* (2013) traces the course of two centuries of research and identifies three stylized modes of discourse informing the historical representation of tantric/esoteric Buddhism:⁹⁵

That is to say, one may read of Tantric Buddhism as the end of a prior process (the history of Indian Buddhism as a whole), or as the ancient beginnings of Indian religion, or as a medieval waypoint.

According to Wedemeyer, a narrative of historical end and moral decline is underpinned by the archetypical “metaphor of organic development” recurrent across East and West, that of recovered ancient spirituality is predicated on the “vision of the universal existence of archaic matriarchal cultures” shared by the Romantically-inclined mindsets, and that of a “medieval” phenomena speaks to “a regrettable lapse in cultural quality.” As such, we are dealing “rather with a thematics of style intimately interwoven with an elaborate network of associations within the Western historical imagination, whose applicability to Buddhist Tantrism is based on little more than the most tenuous of historical analogies.”⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Operational in a broader disciplinary field beyond the studies of tantric/esoteric Buddhism, Western intellectual assumptions find expressions in Indian Buddhist studies as well. Schopon (1991) in his accounting for an overriding textual orientation in the early phase of Indian Buddhist studies reveals a link with a Protestant assumption concerning the location of “true religion.” He further points out that “what was in origin a sixteenth-century Protestant polemical conception of where ‘true’ religion is located has been so thoroughly absorbed into the Western intellectual tradition that it is now taken too often entirely as a given” (22).

⁹⁵ See Wedemeyer 2013: 42.

⁹⁶ See Wedemeyer 2013: 37–67.

However, as much as modern scholarship on Buddhist Tantra or esoterism could be deconstructed into an intellectual history showing how Westerners have drawn on and appropriated the Asian esoteric knowledge to address their own cultural and epistemological concerns, the same body of inquiries also represents an ongoing scholarly process of discovering and comprehending the meaning of Buddhist Tantra or esoterism from the distinctively Western perspectives that in part illuminate the original traditions. Being conscious of the teleologies and presuppositions inherent in these scholarly accounts does not annul the scholarship once and for all, but helps us disentangle the hermeneutical aims from the works we are reading and appreciate the knowledge revealed through the modern academic apparatus.

Besides the etic interpretative models fed by the broader discursive field of Western historical and cultural imagination, the modern scholarly undertakings to make sense of tantric/esoteric Buddhism are also conditioned by the differentiation and multiplicity of emic genealogical horizons.⁹⁷ Among the diverse body of tantric/esoteric Buddhist traditions diverging from the Indian development at different temporal loci, the usual practice for scholars – in ways explicit or implicit – is to take their points of departure from a certain historical-systematical coordinate whereby the subject matter is considered to have gained its own maturity. As such, scholarly reconstruction of a tantric/esoteric Buddhist history is entangled with a teleology informed by culturally particular genealogies, which in turn navigates towards a distinct set of registers and

⁹⁷ Unlike what Urban (1999) has conceived of the “singular abstract, and clearly defined entity” “Tantrism” as merely “a joint construction of certain Indian texts, European Orientalist scholarship and the Western popular imagination,” Buddhist Tantra or esotericism as a systemic presentation of knowledge and praxis finds its genealogical expressions in the traditional Buddhist world.

parameters defined and circumscribed by the tantric/esoteric Buddhist representative in his/her choice.

The two terms “tantric Buddhism” and “esoteric Buddhism” appear interchangeable with each other in most cases of scholarly writing. However, under the circumstances where they are treated separately, the contextual difference on their usages indicates a bifurcation of interpretative frameworks into Indo-Tibetan and Sino-Japanese disciplinary assumptions. While Indo-Tibetologists tend to establish the parameters of “tantric Buddhism” chiefly in tantric scriptures and associated praxes, scholars from the Sino-Japanology circles – especially those engaging Sinitic issues – tend to gear their undertaking of “esoteric Buddhism” towards the axis of the Mahāyāna ritual life laden with the “secrecy” (*mi* 密) discourse.⁹⁸

The divergence derives from different genealogical trajectories presupposed by the respective system taking root in a particular cultural soil – i.e., Tibetan tantric Buddhism and Sinitic esoteric Buddhism. A major point of disagreement lies in different readings of the evidence which preceded the 7th-century ritualistic turn of soteriological focus within the Mahāyāna. Indo-Tibetologists subscribe to the Tibetan understanding of Buddhist Tantra in that it navigates one to awakening through ritual means in contrast with the sūtric or *pāramitā* mode of praxis which advocates traditional Mahāyāna soteriological means.⁹⁹ Thus, the inclusion of pre-7th century developments – categorized

⁹⁸ The whole volume *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (2011) constitutes a commentary on this East Asian Buddhist studies tendency. For issues on terminological clarifications, see the introductory remark in Orzech, Payne & Sørensen 2011: 4–8.

⁹⁹ David Snellgrove (2002: 130) adopts this account in his *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan successors* (1st version in 1987) which contains a historical presentation of tantric Buddhism and its transmission to Tibet. Ronald Davidson (2002a) adds a historical context to this ritualistic turn of Mahāyāna soteriology, accounting for its socio-political

as Kriyā- and Caryā-tantras in Tibetan tantric doxography – is attributed as an anachronistic projection of a self-contained strand of tantric Buddhism onto the historical phase when ritual means within the Mahāyāna were utilized only for worldly purposes. Sinologists, on the other hand, trace the roots of “esoteric Buddhism” to the *dhāraṇī*-centered ritualism emerging in *tandem* with the rise of Mahāyāna, and therefore acknowledge the pre-7th century esoteric liturgical tradition as an indispensable part of the self-consciously esoteric Buddhist canon.¹⁰⁰

The conditioning effect of native genealogy is more salient in the generic usage of such emic terms as “Vajrayāna” and “Mantrayāna[/naya]” which in and of themselves connote particular cultural-historical coordinates within the grid of tantric/esoteric Buddhism and therefore embrace only limited genealogical horizons. These terms are too specific as to exclude so many of what they allegedly subsume. Imposing such context-dependent terms onto a polythetic complex speaking to a broader range of ritual theory and practice across time and system leads to a reductive amalgamation of alien threads

drive. Kapstein (2001: 233–245) poses a revision to Snellgrove’s theory by arguing that “the practice of ‘incantation and ritual,’ directed to both ultimate and mundane ends, had become normal Mahāyāna practice, and not merely popular cult shunned by the learned clergy, prior to the sixth century, and probably as early as the third.” However, he also notes that, only after the ritual corpus “had grown sufficiently massive to take on a life of its own,” “conditions came to favor the emergence of the mantrayāna and later Vajrayāna as distinct ways of Buddhist practice, apart from the pāramitāyāna, the ethico-philosophical tradition of the Mahāyāna.” This additional note again brings the starting point of “tantric Buddhism” to its 7th-century emergence out of the traditional Mahāyāna mode characterized by the *pāramitā* praxis.

¹⁰⁰ Henrik Sørensen (2011) champions this view. The strong ideological implication from his capitalization of “Esoteric” marks his personal theoretical reading. A counteractive line is advanced by Robert Sharf (2002) and Richard McBride (2004), who seek to problematize the actual historical existence of a self-contained entity “Chinese esoteric Buddhism” and argue that much of what we regard as esoteric Buddhist is no more than Mahāyānist. Sharf even goes so far as to suggest that the so-called “Chinese esoteric Buddhism” is no more than a historical fabrication evoked by Japanese sectarian needs. However, embedded in this argumental line still is the implication that these esoteric Buddhist “phenomena” are traceable to the beginning of the Mahāyāna movement, bypassing the 7th-century shift of soteriological focus.

and conflicting presuppositions into a collective statement which is in nature anachronistic and fundamentalist.

A definitional attempt to make overarching sense of tantric/esoteric Buddhism is thus not intended in the current research. The term in itself as a product of modern scholarly reconstruction is so highly charged as any single definition trying to bring coherence and completeness to the subject risks leading to reductive interpretation and – perhaps even worse – generating new layers of construct. Rather, I will adopt a contextual approach and limit the scope of my inquiry to the Indo-Tibetan line of Buddhist Tantra. As such, I anchor the proper domain of the subject in the Tibetan understanding of the mantric mode of soteriology (*gsang sngags kyi tshul*) in distinction with the sūtric or *pāramitā* mode (*pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshul*) and trace its genesis to its late 7th-century rise as a self-consciously movement taking place within Buddhism.

3.1.2. A history-cum-topography of Indian Buddhist Tantra

Tantric Buddhism is established in Tibet under such rubrics as “Vajrayāna” (*rdo rje theg pa*), “Mantrayāna” (*sngags kyi theg pa*), “[Guhya]mantranaya” (*[gsang] sngags kyi tshul*), “Resultant Vehicle” (*'bras bu'i theg pa*), and “Upāya Vehicle” (*thabs kyi theg pa*). No matter how variously it has been designated, a generic understanding of Tibetan tantric Buddhism should be placed in a context whereby the subject is defined along the Mahāyāna spectrum of doctrine and praxis by what it is not – that is, by the traditional non-tantric Mahāyāna way charged with the sūtric or *pāramitā* meanings and discourses. Accordingly, in the Tibetan Buddhist milieu, the sūtric counterpart is assigned labels such

as “Mahāyāna” (*theg pa chen po*), “Pāramitāyāna” (*pha rol tu phyin pa ’i theg pa*), “Pāramitānaya” (*pha rol tu phyin pa ’i tshul*), and “Causal Vehicle” (*rgyu ’i theg pa*).

While the Nine-vehicle system became ubiquitous as a reference for tantric doxography among the rNying-ma followers, those of the gSar-ma traditions adopted a new fourfold classification scheme that reflected the latest Indian developments. The gSar-ma codified system include the Kriyātantra (*bya ba ’i rgyud*), Caryātantra (*spyod pa ’i rgyud*), Yogatantra (*rnal ’byor gyi rgyu*), and Yoganiruttaratantra (*rnal ’byor bla na med pa ’i rgyud*).¹⁰¹ The top class Yoganiruttaratantra is further classified threefold into the *Upāyatantra (*thabs kyi rgyud*, i.e., Father Tantra), *Prajñātantra (*shes rab kyi rgyud*, i.e., Mother Tantra) and Advayatantra (*[thabs shes rab] gnyis su med pa ’i rgyud*).¹⁰²

Such a well-organized Tibetan tantric Buddhist canon accorded with sophisticated hermeneutics and structured taxonomy represents an ongoing systematization of multiple continuous threads, upon which artificial knots and connections were imposed. This appears no less constructed and interpretative in nature than the modern scholarly attempts to lend “tantric Buddhism” a definition. Thus we should be careful not to reify the Indian past by projecting the later layers of interpretation onto it. However, the topography of Buddhist tantras as reflected in the Tibetan fourfold bibliographic taxonomy is not entirely as ahistorical as its seemingly constructive character would have

¹⁰¹ The Tibetan fourfold classification scheme of tantras started with the early Sa-skyā patriarchs such as Sa-chen Kun-dga’-snying-po (1092–1158) and bSod-nams-rtse-mo (1142–1182); see the *rGyud chung*: 8a3; the *rGyud spyi*: 34a1–4. For a long history the Indian and Tibetan attempts to make sense of and organize the evolving body of tantric scriptures till the point a fourfold classification scheme was settled in Tibet during the 12th century, see Dalton 2005. For the time-honored mistake made with reconstructing the Sanskrit for the Tibetan *rnal ’byor bla na med pa* as *anuttarayoga* and the choice of *yoganiruttara* as the proper Sanskrit equivalent based on readings of available Sanskrit manuscripts, see Isaacson 1998, note 12; Dalton 2005: 152, note 84.

¹⁰² See the *rGyud chung*: 13a6–b1; the *rGyud spyi*: 36b1.

us to perceive. Rather, the scheme does disclose the historical evolution of Indian Buddhist Tantra unfolding through the progressive advancement of praxis along the hierarchical line. In order to unpack the historical richness condensed into the Tibetan systems, I attend to an evolving continuum of Buddhist Tantra driven by local horizons expressing identity and distinctness and try my best to ground the analysis in a sense of historical development.

As such, I locate the starting point in the late 7th-century India in which Buddhist Tantra started to lay a claim to distinct identity through a conscious separation from the traditional Mahāyāna way of six *pāramitās*. It arose in the Indian Buddhist milieu as a systematic presentation of ritual-oriented soteriological means under the reflexive rubric *mantranaya* (“mantric mode”)¹⁰³ and marked the generation of the Yogatantra rubric. A paradigm shift to the greater focus on wrathful deities, sexualization, and inner yoga physiology gave rise to a new rubric of Mahāyogatantra towards the end of the 8th century. Then new ritual and ideological developments begin to surface under the rubric of Yogiṇītantra, which focused on feminine deities, transgression, lay ideals, sexuality, and every more complex yogic physiological practices. A rubric of Yoganiruttaratantra first seems to emerge as a way to acknowledge those developments, and try to categorize their relation to the earlier Mahāyoga developments, first by positioning itself as a

¹⁰³ Other variants of *mantranaya* include *guhyanmantranaya* (“mode of secret mantra”) and *mantracaryānaya* (“mode of mantric conduct”). Both the *guhyanmantranaya* and the *mantracaryānaya* are found in the *Mahāvairovanābhisaṃbhodhi-tantra* (mid-7th century). The 8th-century tantric exegete Buddhaguhya employs the term *mantranaya* (*sngags kyi tshul*) in his commentary on the *Mahāvairovanābhisaṃbhodhi* to describe the same set of teachings and ritual techniques in contradistinction to the *pāramitā* mode. The term *mantranaya* also occurred in the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (about 750–850). Later tantric scholars such as Maitrīpa and Ratnākaraśānti replaced the term *mantranaya* with *mantrayāna*, further raising its status to that of a vehicle as Mahāyāna has had. See de Jong 1984: 92–93; Hodge 1995: 58; Weinberger 2003: 16–17.

subdivision of Mahāyoga and ultimately as a separate and superior class. Then over time it becomes an overarching rubric which subsumes Mahāyoga- and Yogiṇī-tantras alike as its own subdivisions, which are labeled as *Upāyatantra and *Prajñātantra respectively. Meanwhile, the latest developments in Buddhist Tantra represented by the *Kālacakratantra* came to be classified as third subclass – the Advayatantra – under Yoganiruttaratantra. I will draw on this model to structure my accounts of Indian Buddhist Tantra, the genesis and evolution of which is to be traced through the literary lenses of scriptural compilation and bibliographic taxonomy.

3.1.2.1. Institutional and non-institutional esoterisms: a heuristic divide

Ronald Davidson (2002a) traces two sociologies of knowledge at work in the formation of Indian tantric Buddhism – that is, the institutional and non-institutional esoterisms – in terms of their respective “primary focus and generative nexus.” According to Davidson, the institutional esoterism was “based on decisions predominantly made within the monastic community” and principally belonged to “the domain of monks, who wrote and preached in a hermeneutical method that emphasized the development and integration of esoteric ideals and models into institutional requirements.”¹⁰⁴ At the other end of the spectrum was the siddha (accomplished being) community representative of a new form of Buddhist personality associated with a

¹⁰⁴ See Davidson 2002a: 76, 114. Ronald Davidson brings the canonical compilation and exegesis of tantric literature he considers as the “quintessential monkish endeavor” into the scriptural horizons whereby certain tantric texts were accorded a sacred authenticity building on as much the previous Mahāyāna models as the new mythology of revelation (144–153). He also draws on the monks’ literary production – such as that of Buddhaguhya’s tantric exegetical pattern – to account for the dynamics of this Buddhist institutional esoterism (155–160).

non/anti-institutional aura. The Buddhist siddha movement arose out of the marginalized individuals/groups around the mid-8th century and developed radical contemplative techniques wrapped “in language that was simultaneously playful and ferocious, erotic and destructive.”¹⁰⁵

These two mutually co-constituting communities – the monastic and the siddha – represent symbiotic estates in the edifice of tantric Buddhism. As monasteries continued to pursue their esoteric agenda of complex ritualism in service of institutional aims, the siddha input deepened the tantric interiorization of Buddhist ritualism and experimented with transgressive rhetoric and practices. As the latter movements gained traction, the monastics were thus forced to develop new hermeneutical strategies to de-odorize the transgressive rhetorics by detaching rhetoric from behavior as they tried to integrate into their own traditions the cutting edge ritual techniques and evocative symbolism introduced by the siddhas. As Davidson notes in the conclusion of his book, “ultimately, both monks and siddhas developed a symbiotic relationship ... with the two estates eventually sharing a common syllabus, ritual vocabulary, and a grudging respect for each other’s scriptural compositions and spirituality.”¹⁰⁶

Davidson’s twofold model of institutional and non-institutional esoterisms echoes the typography-cum-chronology of tantric Buddhist scriptures and associated praxes. The rise of institutional esoterism marked a shift of the ritual center from the external altar to be worshipped in the proto-tantric¹⁰⁷ Mahāyāna ritual life to the Buddhist subject him- or

¹⁰⁵ See Davidson 2002a, chapter 6 and 7.

¹⁰⁶ See Davidson 2002a: 338.

¹⁰⁷ Strickmann (1996: 130; 2002: 103–109) justifies the term “proto-tantric” to be applied to the Mahāyāna rituals represented by what are designated as the Kriyātantra, but he admits some

herself to be identified as the enlightened being in what was retroactively classified as Yogatantra, and then gradually developed into new forms called Mahāyoga. Then the contemplative and technical innovations fueled by the siddha-based inspirations from outside the monastic institution took the ritual center further inwards to the physical anatomy and embodied experience, which was represented by tantric scriptures that came to be classified as Yogiṅītantra.

However, one has to bear in mind that the two camps – that of monk and of siddha – were historical developments with complex interrelations and boundaries not as clear-cut as the distinction would leave us to conceive, such that the institutional/non-institutional correlates assigned to each were not so much precise sociological parameters as heuristic devices helping us make sense of these developments in broad strokes. For instance, it was usually monastic hands that edited and revised scriptures into their final codified and formal contours, as well as repositioned and reinterpreted their content with extensive scholastic commentaries. Thus even the works that had their provenance in the non-institutional siddha societies eventually took literary forms and contexts driven by institutional efforts. In addition, it should be noted we often lack clear understandings of the true social base of key siddha personalities, or the authors behind early non-institutional texts, such that the rhetoric of transgression and anti-institutionalism may well have been promulgated in cases by monks or ex-monks critiquing their own legacy.

uneasiness as those “proto-tantric” texts continued to be composed after the advent of tantras; c.f. Davidson 2002a: 118, note 18. Davidson (2002a: 144–145) follows Strickmann’s terminological usage, and points out that the term itself does not necessarily indicate that these scriptures “were anticipating the later, mature system.” He further notes that “the nature of the early collections may be inferred from surviving works entitled the *Dhāraṅīsamgraha* (Collection of Spells), and the introduction to *Atikūṭa’s **Dhāraṅīsamgraha* indicates that it was considered a fraction of a much larger *Dhāraṅī-piṭaka*.”

Meanwhile, problematic and perplexing as the task of pinning down the dates of ongoing composition and revision for a tantra has always seemed to be, the moment of its emerging to the attention of commentators and doxographers is relatively easier to determine. Thus, I will leave the later dating issues aside and focus on the chronology of Buddhist tantric development based upon the textual witnesses to the way certain tantras circulated and were commented upon.

3.1.2.1.1. Institutional esoterism and Yogatantra

Building itself upon the rich heritage of Mahāyāna doctrines and rituals, the entirely new religious persuasion of Buddhist Tantra reworked a broad configuration of Mahāyāna ritual horizons into a distinct mode of meaning, rhetoric and praxis. In the early stage, the entire architecture was organized around the symbolic nexus of *divine kingship*.¹⁰⁸ The two key scriptural representatives setting out the philosophical and ritual foundations for the tantric transformation of ritual Mahāyāna are the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-tantra (MVT)* and the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*

¹⁰⁸ Davidson (2002a: 113) attributes the emergence of tantric Buddhism (“esoteric Buddhism” in his term) to “both a response and a strategy on the part of facets within Buddhist communities.” According to Davidson, the socio-political challenges posed to the Buddhist institution and community of the age drove the tantric reformulation of Buddhism and fueled its new discursive paradigm. Especially with regard to the tantric empowerment ritual (*abhiṣeka, dbang*), Davidson (113–168) argues that its rhetorical focus on the power transference discloses Buddhism attempts to internalize the contemporary political reality and redeploy it in a specifically Buddhist manner as a strategy to revitalize Buddhist communities. As much as Davidson’s accounts about the historical context where tantric Buddhism emerged is challenged by Wedemeyer (2013: 59, 63–64) for the excessive loading of the *medieval* rhetorics, the former’s observation of the royalist metaphor of coronation and power dominion as an overarching principle embodying the manner in which ritual elements were configured into a Buddhist tantric whole is quite insightful and profound. Nonetheless, questions might be asked: despite its effects in remolding the Buddhist expressions, has the socio-political dynamics of the day charged the new vocabulary with meanings? And did these external socio-political factors constitute a predominant force in the inner workings of the religious reformulation?

(*STTS*).¹⁰⁹ Both works deal with what came to be normative tantric Buddhist topics of initiation (*abhiṣeka*), *mantra* recitation, *mudrā* gesture, *maṇḍala* construction and visualization technique, particularly the paradigmatic tantric Buddhist practice of “deity yoga” (*devatāyoga*, *lha'i rnal 'byor*) by means of which one contemplatively reconfigures the self into an enlightened being.¹¹⁰ On the doctrinal grounds, nonetheless,

¹⁰⁹ Both scriptures were in place by the late 7th century (for the dating of the *MVT*, see Hodge 2003: 14–17; for that of the *STTS*, see Weinberger 2010: 134–136). As indicated by their titles in Chinese translation, these two works were probably not intended as a Buddhist *tantra* per se when they first made their way in China. Nonetheless, the two scriptures and associated philosophical and ritual traditions, fully transmitted through China to Japan, have been held of seminal importance by the mainstream esoteric Buddhism in East Asia where later Indian tantric developments were largely ignored. For a detailed study of the *MVT* including an English translation based on the Tibetan version (with a translation of Buddhaguhya’s commentary contained), see Hodge 2013; for an English translation of the *MVT* based on the Chinese version, see Giebel 2005; for an English translation of the *STTS* based on the Chinese version (Amoghavajra’s translation), see under the title “*Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra*” in Giebel 2001; for a comprehensive study of the *STTS* against the background of its transmission in Tibet, see Weinberger 2004.

¹¹⁰ The *MVT* contains very coarse descriptions about the “deity yoga” praxis, but explicitly expresses the soteriological significance of visualizing oneself as the enlightened being. The chapter on the “Eight Secret *Mudrās*” (Chapter Fifteen in the Tibetan version; Chapter fourteen in the Chinese version) contains the expression “deity yoga” (*lha'i rnal 'byor*, *benzun xiangying* 本尊相应) for the praxis; see the *MVT* (D 491: 213a7; Hodge 2003: 302): *rang gi lha'i rnal 'byor du bya ba yod de*; (T no. 848, vol. 18: 37a02; Giebel 2005: 151): 如本尊相应。The chapter on the “Hundred Letters” recitation (Chapter Twenty-three in the Tibetan version; Chapter Twenty-one in the Chinese version) contains a contemplative procedure of first meditating on the dependent origination of one’s own physical body and then taking on the enlightened form of the tutelary deity (*lha*, *benzun* 本尊); see the *MVT* (D 491: 222b7–223a3; Hodge 2003: 359): *'di ltar lus la lus kyi gzugs bskyed par bya'o || ... ci ltar bdag gi mig dang | rna ba dang | sna dang | lce dang | lus dang | yid la sogs pa 'byung ba chen po bzhi'i nang du gtogs pa yin la | de dag kyang ngo bo nyid kyis stong pa ... gzung du med pa | rgyu dang las las byung ba ste | gzugs brnyan dang 'dra ba de bzhin du de bzhin gshegs pa rnam kyis mngon par rdzogs par sangs rgyas so || de dag kyang phan tshun rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba'i rgyun ma chad par 'brel ba ste | gang la brten nas skyes pa de ni gzugs brnyan 'dra bar 'byung ngo || de lta bas na phan tshun rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba'i phyir | lha gang yin pa de bdag yin bdag gang yin pa de ni lha yin no zhes de ltar lus kyis lus kyi gzugs lha'i skur bskyed par bya'o*; (T no. 848, vol. 18: 41a08–14; Giebel 2005: 176): 如是自身影像生起...如眼耳鼻舌身意等。四大种摄持集聚。彼如是自性空...无所执着等于影像。彼如来成正觉。互相缘起无有间绝。若从缘生。彼即如影像生。是故诸本尊即我。我即本尊。互相发起。身所生身。尊形像生; c.f. Weinberger 2003: 182–185.

The *STTS* embeds within its opening narrative of the Buddha’s awakening process a step-by-step procedure of deity yoga praxis – more detailed and complete ever found in a Buddhist *tantra* – for one to first deconstruct the self by contemplating on the emptiness and luminosity of

while the *MVT* displays a stronger subscription to traditional Mahāyāna philosophical themes such as the nature of the mind and the gnostic agency of *buddhas* at both macro- and micro-cosmic levels, the *STTS* initiates a number of ritual and narrative innovations which shape subsequent tantric developments, most notably the rhetoric of power and subjugation, the centrality of ritual initiation, and the transformation of meditation into an intensely ritualized process of self-transformation into the presiding deity of *maṇḍala* as kingdom.¹¹¹

It was not until a few decades later after the textual production of the *MVT* and the *STTS* that tantric Buddhist exegetes developed the rubric “*yogatantra*” to apply to the scriptural corpus to which these two works belong. Buddhaguhya (fl. c. 760) opens both of his extensive (*bhāṣya*, *bshad pa*) and condensed (*piṅḍārtha*, *bsdus pa'i don*) commentaries on the *MVT* with a basic distinction between the *pāramitā* and the *mantra* modes of praxis (*pha rol tu phyin pa'i sgo & sngags kyi sgo*), each of which is further divided into an object-involving approach (*dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa*) and a

the mind and then reconstruct the identity in the divine form of a *buddha*. The contemplation on the mind is combined with ritual means such as mantric recitation, leading the practitioner to visualize the luminosity of the mind in the shape of a moon disc and then a *vajra* on that moon disc, all the way up to the transformation of the self into an enlightened form. This formulation moves the previously peripheral ritual praxis to the soteriological center. See the *STTS* (Yamada 1981: 8–9; D 476: 3b5–4b3; T no. 865, vol. 18: 207c15–208a22; Giebel 2001: 23–24); c.f. Weinberger 2003: 174–178. Weinberger (2003: 178–179) further notes that it is in the *STTS* that the “ontological focus” on the luminous nature of the mind – unseen in the *MVT* – is “explicitly incorporated for the first time into the practice of deity yoga.”

Weinberger (2003: 179–182) also traces the earlier references to deity yoga in the Chinese apocrypha *Guanding jing* 灌顶经 (T no. 1331, vol. 21) dating to the mid-5th century and the *Dhyānottaraṣaṭaṭikā* (D 808) later classified as the Kriyātantra, which, however, is not comparable to what is presented in the *STTS* in terms of soteriological significance and procedural complexity.

¹¹¹ For the philosophical content of the *MVT*, see Hodge 2003: 29–40; for the *STTS* innovations, see Weinberger 2003: 173–218. Davidson (2002a: 152) attributes these two works to the *canon in use*, a body of texts individually acknowledged “at discrete points in the hermeneutic process” and “identified as important in reference by some of the more influential monks” of the age.

profound and extensive approach (*zab cing rgya che ba la mos pa*) in correlation with disciples' proclivities. Within the *mantra* mode, those oriented to the object-involving approach are assigned the Kriyātantra (*bya ba 'i rgyud*) teachings concerning external practice (*phyi 'i spyod pa*) and more mundane ends, while those oriented to the profound and extensive approach are assigned the Yogatantra (*sbyor ba 'i rgyud*) teachings concerning inner practice (*nang gi spyod pa*) and more soteriological aims.¹¹² While Buddhaguhya assigns both the *MVT* and the *STTS* to the Yogatantra category, he notes that the *MVT* can also sometimes be considered as a *kriyātantra* or an example of a possible intermediary category of tantras called “both” (*ubhayā, gnyis ka*) since it contains both internal and external practices, even though it is associated with the ultimate-level practice.¹¹³

¹¹² The discussions in Buddhaguhya's extensive and condensed commentaries respectively differ only in ways of wording. Both share the same substantive content, though not reproducing each other verbatim. See the *MVTBh* (65a3–b4): *bcom ldan 'das kyiis thog ma thams cad mkhyen pa 'i ye shes brnyes nas | thams cad mkhyen pa 'i ye shes des 'dul ba 'i 'gro ba rnam pa gnyis su gzigs pa ni | dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa gtsor gyur pa rnams dang | zab cing rgya che ba la mos pa gtsor gyur pa rnams so || 'dul ba 'i 'gro ba de rnams la yang spyod pa rnam pa gnyis te | pha rol tu phyin pa 'i sgo nas 'jug cing spyod pa dang | sngags kyi sgo nas 'jug cing spyod pa 'o || ... de bzhin du zab cing rgya che bsngags kyi sgo nas 'jug cing spyod pa 'i gdul bya 'i 'gro ba rnams la yang rnam pa gnyis te | dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa gtsor gyur pa dang | zab cing rgya che ba la mos pa gtsor gyur ba ste | de la dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa gtsor gyur pa rnams kyi don du ... bya ba 'i rgyud rnams bstan to || de bzhin du zab cing rgya che bas 'dul ba 'i 'gro ba rnams kyi don du 'phags pa de kho na nyid bsdu pa 'i rgyud la sogs pa bstan te | ... de ltar mngon pa ni 'phags pa de nyid bsdu pa la sogs pa nang gi sbyor ba gtsor gyur pa yin mod kyi | phyi 'i spyod pa rnams kyang med pa ma yin no || de bzhin du bya ba 'i rgyud rnams kyang phyi 'i spyod pa gtsor gyur pa yin mod kyi | nang gi spyod pa yang med pa ma yin te |; for an English translation, see Hodge 2003: 43. For the discussion in the condensed commentary, see the *MVTP*: 3a5–b4; for an English translation, see Hodge 2003: 448–449. C.f. Dalton 2005: 122–123.*

¹¹³ See the *MVTBh* (65b5–6; Hodge 2003:): *de bzhin du rnam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub pa rnam par sprul pa 'i byin gyi rlabs kyi rgyu 'di yang thabs dang shes rab gtsor gyur pa sbyor ba 'i rgyud yin mod kyi bya ba la mos pa 'i gdul bya 'i 'gro ba rnams la gzung ba 'i phyir bya ba 'i rgyud kyi rjes su mthun pa 'i spyod pa dag kyang bstan pas | bya ba 'i rgyud dam gnyis ka 'i rgyud lta bur so sor brtags shing grags so ||; the *MVTP* (3b4–6; Hodge 2003: 449).*

Therefore, Buddhaguhya makes the distinction between two modes of the ritualistic *mantra* traditions based on the degree of interiorization. A similar classificatory practice is seen in Vilāsavajra’s slightly later commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*. Evidently following the same convention as Buddhaguhya, Vilāsavajra opens his exegetical work with a discussion of tantric classification. He presents an explicitly threefold scheme of Kriyā-, Caryā- and Yoga-tantras, among which the Caryā derives from the somewhat vague *ubhayā* category in Buddhaguhya’s scheme.¹¹⁴ This twofold division of tantras into the *kriyā* and *yoga* types also extended into the Dunhuang corpus.¹¹⁵

Clearly, judging from their assimilation of Kriyātantra into the *mantra* mode scheme, the 8th-century tantric Buddhist exegetes saw the newly-emerging internal-oriented tantric techniques to be deeply indebted to the earlier external esoteric rituals present within Mahāyāna from its beginning.¹¹⁶ However, those Mahāyāna ritual scriptures designated as the Kriyātantra did not identify themselves so originally, but rather this was a retroactive assimilation than a self-conscious subscription of those texts

¹¹⁴ See Dalton 2005: 124–125.

¹¹⁵ Dalton (2004: 5–6) found a commentary on a *STTS* sādhana (found in ITJ 448 and ITJ 417) states that while the Kriyātantra is about external offerings, the Yogatantra concerns “*samādhi* offering” (*ting nge ’dzin mchod pa*) made by goddesses. See ITJ 447/1, r19.2: *ki ya ’i gzhung las ni men tog dang spos dang mchos pa sna tshogs gyis byed kyi | yog ga ’i gzhu ni lha mo rnam kyis ting nge ’dzin mchod pa ’o* |. The manual further emphasizes the significant Mahāyāna soteriology contained in the inner *samādhi* (*nang gi ting nge ’dzin*) praxis as prescribed by the Yogatantra. See ITJ 477/1, r20.4: *de nas gsang ba ’i mchod pa zhes bya ba gang zhe na | nang gi ting nge ’dzin gyi mchod pa ni | byang cub gyi ye shes kyi rgyu yin bas | nyan thos dang rang sangs rgyas kyi spyad yul du ma gyur pas gsang zhes bya ’o* |.

¹¹⁶ As for the historical relationship of tantric Buddhist ritualism with the common Mahāyāna, Matsunaga Yūkei ascribes most early tantras to the ritualization of key Mahāyāna concepts (see the de Jong summary in 1984: 98–9), whereas Snellgrove (2002: 233–4) views them as the ritual complements to the major sūtras of common Mahāyāna. One possible direction of carrying through these proximate – yet slightly differing – lines of argument is to consider the processes of ritual embodiment as an important mode already underway from the early Mahāyāna.

to a Buddhist tantric corpus that was not even a conscious category at the time of their composition. This initial phase of distinctively tantric development within Buddhism – marked by the reflexive textual category “*yogatantra*” – constitutes a temporal pivot which retroactively built a genealogy for itself out of the ritual Mahāyāna and laid out discursive and practical grounds from which further transformations were to be fashioned.

3.1.2.1.2. Siddhic inspiration and a tendency towards interiorization

Towards the mid-8th century, tantric Buddhism underwent a yogic physiological turn stemming from the newly emergent Buddhist siddha communities that emerged from the periphery or exterior of the Mahāyāna monastic institutional base. The rise of Buddhist siddhas appears to have been not so much a unitary movement as a cluster of loosely grouped developments.¹¹⁷ These developments – with their own internal plurality and diachronic evolution – brought into the Buddhist community an explosion of yogic techniques in the form of new “perfection phase” (*utpanna-/niṣpanna-karama, rdzogs rim*) praxis as an extension of the previously installed *deity yoga* now reformulated as the “generation phase” (*utpattikrama, bskyed rim*) praxis. The realigned ritual encounter with one’s own internal bodily processes constituted a shift of contemplative epistemology towards interior physiology – as experienced in extreme moments of sexuality and death in particular – such that the transgressive imagery of eroticism and violence gradually

¹¹⁷ As Davidson (2002a: 118) notes, “Buddhist siddha presence was already attested in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature by 720–730 C.E.” But he warns elsewhere in the same book (2002a: 252): “we must be wary of attempts ... to homogenize siddhas into a single Buddhist subculture and should understand that they exhibited a wide variation of background, learning, orientation, and so forth.”

displaced the previously dominant royalist metaphor from its centrality in the tantric expression of Buddhist realities.

The transgressive imagery brought to the table by siddhas posed a challenge to the Buddhist monastic establishment, yet at the same time sparked new possibilities for its institutional revitalization and relevance. Shortly after their scriptural composition,¹¹⁸ the domestication or “de-odorization” of siddha-inspired tantras got underway in joint efforts of monastics and more conservative siddhas with exegetical reconfigurations of the erotic, violent, and transgressive paradigms by reading imagery, rhetoric and even practice in symbolic terms. A variety of hermeneutical devices were thus employed to integrate the newly evolving tantric scriptures into the evolving monastic canon of acceptable tantric traditions.¹¹⁹ As such, the commentarial subculture of some strands of Buddhist Tantra (namely the *Yogiṇītantras*) displayed a different set of values and orientation than the subculture of scriptural composition.

The new class of siddha-inspired Buddhist tantric literature – arising from the 8th through 11th centuries in India – could be roughly divided into two typologies: the Mahāyoga- and *Yogiṇī*-tantras.¹²⁰ The Mahāyogatantra as a bibliographic rubric was

¹¹⁸ Davidson (2002a: 238–239) observes that “the esoteric (especially siddha) scriptures arose as preeminently social events,” rather than “an individually inspired system.”

¹¹⁹ For the sociology of the articulation of the siddha-inspired tantras as well as the hermeneutics adopted for the scriptural authentication, see Davidson 2002a, Chapter 6.

¹²⁰ Sanderson (1994) has argued that the *Yogiṇītantra* represented a Buddhist appropriation of the Śaiva Kāpālika tantric literature based on his philological studies of the intertextuality between the Buddhist and Śaiva tantric literature. While the sustained Kāpālika influence is undisputed, Davidson (2002a: 203) leaves the issue open to question “whether the *received* Kāpālika texts are actually the sole or primary sources for the *yogiṇī tantras*.” He further summarizes three major problems in Sanderson’s “rather extreme version of a unilateral appropriation,” namely “chronological difficulties, a lack of examination of the sources of Śaiva formulations, and an excessively narrow definition of materials available to Buddhists.”

employed slightly earlier than the *Yogiṅītantra*, and seems to have been used to capture monastic developments growing out of *Yogatantra* as well as more radical developments emerging out of non-monastic circles. Representative of a shift of attention to the sexual anatomy as the new soteriological landscape, the earliest siddha-inspired tantras dating to the 8th century simply described and prescribed a sexual ritual in sacramental – rather than yogic – terms.¹²¹ These materials include such scriptures as the *Guhyasamāja* and the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, all subsumed under the *Mahāyoga* rubric. In contrast, the rise of *Yogiṅītantras* evidenced increasingly sophisticated techniques for manipulating the subtle body (*vajrakāya*) system via yogic techniques, in addition to a predilection for wrathful deities, female forms, and new arrangements departing from the classic fivefold Buddha family structure.¹²² At this point, some *Mahāyoga* tantras such as the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* were recruited into the *Yogiṅītantra* class, and reinterpreted and expanded in the process. Likewise, the new developments in Buddhist Tantra in turn inspired a yogic turn in the developing commentarial traditions of certain *Mahāyoga* tantras. A best example is the *Guhyasamāja*'s two commentarial traditions, namely the *Ārya* one and the *Jñānapāda* one.

According to the Tibetan tantric doxography established by the *gSar-ma* traditions during the 12th century, both types of tantra are subsumed under the highest class of *Yoganiruttara* (*rnal 'byor bla na med pa*), with the *Mahāyogatantras* classified as Father Tantras (*pha rgyud*) and the *Yogiṅītantras* as Mother Tantras (*ma rgyud*). Nonetheless,

¹²¹ See Davidson 2002a: 198.

¹²² See Dalton 2004: 26–27.

before this distinction became a codified norm as conceived by Tibetans,¹²³ the two lines of Buddhist tantric development embraced respectively by the rubrics Mahāyoga- and Yogiṇī-tantras were not entirely on disparate routes in India. Rather, with their respective textual roots traced to the mid-8th century Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa cycle – one to the *Guhyasamāja* and the other to *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* – both lines cross-pollinated each other in terms of bibliographic taxonomy, ritual innovations, and doctrinal articulation. It was thus, in many ways, a natural outcome that these were integrated together as the two Yoganiruttara subclasses of Father Tantra and Mother Tantra.¹²⁴

Therefore, the two terms *mahāyogatantra* and *yogiṇītantra* – first applied by tantric exegetes or compilers to describing phenomena already in place for decades – are not so much generic and self-contained categories of well-bounded system as heuristic indicators of two Buddhist lines of tantric developments with fluid boundaries and overlapping registers. Thus, in delineating the development of Buddhist Tantra during this period, I will keep a historically informed eye on the formation and evolution of bibliographic taxonomy.

¹²³ Davidson (2005: 35) draws attention to the “discontinuity between the spectrum of tantric systems available in India and the menu of those circulating beyond India’s border.”

¹²⁴ Dalton (2005: 155, note 90) suggests that the two Yoganiruttaratantra subclasses of Father Tantra and Mother Tantra find their respective textual roots in the Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa matrix. The *Guhyasamāja* and *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* – both initially included in the Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa cycle – represent two separate lines of tantric development, one through the *Guhyagarbha* and the other through the *Cakrasamvara* and the *Hevajra*. Though speculative, this theory is worthy of further research based on a close historical-philological reading of relevant texts.

3.1.2.1.2.1. Mahāyogatantra

The concept of “Mahāyogatantra” came to be used to refer to eighteenfold tantric cycle, the earliest instance of which is traceable to the turn of the 9th century. The *Prajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśatkāṭikā* (*PŚT*) composed by Jñānamitra (fl. ca. 800) bears a witness to a cycle of “eighteen great sections” (*sde chen po bco brgyad*) which includes the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogatantra* and the *Guhyasamājatantra*.¹²⁵ This collective term came to be regarded by the Tibetan tradition as a reference to an Mahāyoga eighteenfold cycle, elsewhere known as *ma hā yo ga rgyud sde bco brgyad*, which they themselves used to categorize scriptures in Tibetan translation.¹²⁶ However, as much as Tibetan adopted the conception of a eighteenfold canon, the list seems to be more notional than actual as was inherited. Various lists across the Tibetan literature differ from each other in content and organization, the complexity of which nonetheless will be beyond the scope of the current research.¹²⁷

Already in place in India probably a few decades prior to the emergence of the notion of Mahāyoga eighteenfold cycle was a Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa (*Jingang ding* 金剛

¹²⁵ See the *PŚT* (273a1–3): *sarba buddha sa ma yo ga dang / guhya sa manytsa la sogs pas ... sar ba buddha sa ma yo ga la sogs pa sde chen po bco brgyad ...*; c.f. Almogi 2014: 48–49.

¹²⁶ The *PŚT* was translated into Tibetan during the “Earlier Dissemination” (*snga dar*) period (up till c. 850) and accordingly referred to in the 9th-century *lDan kar ma* (no. 523) and *'Phang thang ma* (36. 20–21) catalogues; c.f. Almogi 2014: 50–51. Almogi (2014: 49–50) introduces another Indic reference to this collective term from the *Guhyagarbhatantravyākhyāna* – Sūryasiṃhaprabha’s commentary on the *Guhyagarbhatantra* which itself was an important tantra included in the eighteenfold list of Mahāyoga – bearing the mention of “Mahāyoga scriptures” (*ma ha yo ga 'i gzhung*). However, the numerous occurrences of the term *mahāyoga* as well as *atiyoga* and *rdzogs pa chen po* leads Almogi to question the Indic origin of this commentary and the identity of its assumed author. Otherwise, it would be a rare witness to these terms in late Indic sources and thus deserves a thorough study.

¹²⁷ Almogi (2014) makes a detailed survey of the various Tibetan lists of eighteen Mahāyoga tantras, “determining and pointing out the main differences or similarities between them, and thereby classifying them into groups and arranging them in chronological order in an attempt to trace their origin and lines of transmission.”

顶) eighteenfold cycle headed by the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*. Amoghavajra (705–774) reported this cycle in his *Jingangding jing yuqie shibahui zhihui* 金刚顶经瑜伽十八会指归 (*T* no. 869, vol. 18) at a certain point after his return to China from India in 746.¹²⁸ The post qualifier *yoga* (*yuqie* 瑜伽) to *vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa tantra* (*jingangding jing* 金刚顶经) in the title may indicate its subscription to the Yogatantra category already well received by the mid-8th century. Curiously enough, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* and the *Guhyasamāja* – the two important tantras that came to be at the heart of what would be later termed as the Mahāyoga cycle – are present in Amoghavajra’s inventory (nos. 9 and 15) as well.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ In this index to the Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa cycle, Amoghavajra devotes much space to a summary of the *STTS*. Except the *STTS* (*Yiqie rulai zhenshi she jiaowang* 一切如来真实摄教王) which heads the list, the rest seventeen tantras in their titles all end with the term *yoga* (*yuqie* 瑜伽); see the *JYZ*. For a study of Amoghavajra’s list, see Giebel 1995. Here I follow Gray’s (2009: 12, note 35) practice of providing both Sanskrit names *vajraśekhara* and *vajroṣṇīṣa* for the translated Chinese *jingang ding* 金刚顶 when discussing the cycle. Gray’s reasoning is that while the title is preserved as *vajraśekhara* in the Tibetan canon, *vajra-uṣṇīṣa* was considered by Kūkai as the right Sanskrit equivalent (c.f. Giebel 1995: 109).

¹²⁹ The *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* ranks the ninth with the title “*Yoga of the Union of All the Buddhas, the Restraint Web for Dākiṇīs*” (*Yiqie fo jihui dajini jiewang yuqie* 一切佛集会拏吉尼戒网瑜伽), while the *Guhyasamāja* as the fifteenth with the title “*Yoga of Secret Assembly*” (*Mimi jihui yuqie* 秘密集会瑜伽). The two tantras’ dual presence in both the Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa and Mahāyoga cycles discloses their possibly intermediary character in showing the Mahāyoga continuities and discontinuities with the Yogatantra class. For the encyclopedic entries to the *Guhyasamāja* and the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* respectively in *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, see Szántó 2015a and 2015c. The *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* does not only display a deeply rooted indebtedness to the Yogatantra ritual paradigm set by such scriptures as the *Paramāḍya* cycle, but also presages the later Yogiṅtantra development in that its verses are found incorporated in tantras belonging to the systems such as Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra; see Sanderson 2009: 145–146, 154; Tomabechi 2006: 103, 143–144. The dating of the *Guhyasamāja* have vexed scholars for decades. The proposed date of the tantra has ranged from the 3rd century to the 8th centuries. Bhattacharyya (1931: xxxiv) dates it to the 3rd century, while Wayman (1980: 97–99) dates it to the 4th century based on his dating of the *Guhyasamāja*’s explanatory tantra *Vajramālā* to the 5th century; c.f. Fremantle 1971: 14; Szántó 2015a: 327. Both dates seem too early. Amoghavajra’s summary of the tantra’s content in his index corresponds only to the fifth chapter of the current version as we have today, which leads to the possibility that the *Guhyasamāja* might have existed in a certain part in its early phase of development by the mid-8th

It seems that the Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa cycle and the Mahāyoga cycle are just instances of a fluid notion of an eighteenfold tantric canon circulating from at least the 8th century onwards.¹³⁰ Thus frameworks of an eighteenfold tantric cycle may have shared social and literary “matrix” and evolved in a bibliographical continuum whereby the list was revised frequently either as new texts emerged or simply according to local sensibilities and interests.¹³¹ A rough chronology indicates that this bibliographical category also reflected the broader paradigm shifts – that is, from the speculative *yogatantra* nature of the Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa to the *mahāyoga* – within Indian tantric Buddhism during the late 8th century. Tantras such as the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* and the *Guhyasamāja* – possibly subsumed under the Yogatantra category at their very beginning – ended up in the new Mahāyoga cycle, marker of a new tantric class created to distinguish recent ritual and iconographic developments.

century. Matsunaga (1978: xxiii–xxvi)’s discussion of the tantra’s date based on its different compositional layer seems more plausible to me. He speculates that “the first half of the 8th century was the formative period of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* while the text in its present form was completed in the latter half of the 8th century.” However, I do not intend to delve deeper into this issue and add more speculations about it. For now it is safe to say that the tantra was made public at least around the mid-8th century by making its presence in the Vajraśekhara/-uṣṇīṣa cycle.

¹³⁰ The at least two types of eighteenfold tantric cycles available to us – namely the Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa and the Mahāyoga – have one thing in common: they are all said to be 100,000 verses in length. The 100,000 verses as a recurrent trope would be traced back to the *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, a traditional Mahāyāna scripture which set the standard for length to which later tantric collections aspired. The “proto-tantric” Buddhist collection *Vidyādhara* – compiled by the mid-7th century – is said also to have 100,000 verses in length, though the number eighteen was impossible; see Gray 2009: 2–4. Davidson (2002a: 146) observes an interesting phenomenon of the “Indian construction of scriptural categories” based on the “magical number eighteen.”

¹³¹ Eastman (1981) compares the Vajra-śekhara/-uṣṇīṣa list with the Tibetan Mahāyoga (Māyājāla) lists. They only share three titles in common, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, the *Guhyasamāja* and the *Śrīparamādyā*. However, as Eastman observes, there is a mirroring relationship between the two types of cycle, which indicates their shared origin in “a massive and probably ultimately mythological *ur-tantra*,” c.f. Dalton 2005: 126–127, note 32.

This new tantric class of Mahāyoga was developed in 8th-century doxographical writings. Vilāsavajra opens his *Guhyagarbhamahātantrarājaṭīkā* – a commentary on the *Guhyagarbha* – with a classificatory scheme which includes a third class “Upāyayānatantra” (*thabs kyi theg pa ’i rgyud*) above the Kriyā- and Yoga-tantras.¹³² The Upāyayānatantra is further divided threefold into the *Upāyatantra (*thabs kyi rgyud*) represented by the *Guhyasamāja*, the *Prajñātantra (*shes rab kyi rgyud*) represented by the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* (*dpal bde mchog*)¹³³ and the Neuter Tantra (*ma ning gi rgyud*) represented by the *Buddhotpāda* (*dpal ’bu ta ’byung ba*). The “Upāyayānatantra” here is almost certainly equivalent to the newly arising category “Mahāyogatantra,” and the way it was classified – into the male *upāya*, female *prajñā* and neuter subclasses – is perhaps the earliest precedent we have of the Tibetan division of the Yoganiruttaratantra Class.¹³⁴ Of note is that the *GMT* declines to include the *Guhyagarbha* itself in this broader

¹³² See the *GMT* (131a.4–5): *ngo bo la gsum ste | phyag na rdo rjes dbang bskur ba la sogs pa bya ba ’i rgyud | de kho na nyid thub pa la sogs pa thub pa ’i rgyud dang | thabs kyi theg pa ’i rgyud do | de la yang gsum ste | dpal gsang ba ’dus pa la sogs pa thabs kyi rgyud dang | dpal bde mchog la sogs pa shes rab kyi rgyud dang | dpal ’bu ta ’byung ba la sogs pa ma ning gi rgyud do* /; c.f. Dalton 2005: 125. For reasons unknown to me, the author uses the term “Muni-tantra” (*thub pa ’i rgyud*) – instead of “Yogatantra” – to designate the second class represented by the *STTS*. As for the discrepancies between Vilāsavajra’s two major tantric commentaries (on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* and the *Guhyagarbha* respectively), Dalton (2005: 131) accounts for it through a loose sense of doxography at work over the theory of chronological difference. He points out that Vilāsavajra is quite likely to have “understood the different classification systems as specific to their respective tantric traditions,” and “it is important to recognize the arbitrary nature of these classifications.”

¹³³ Dalton (2005: 125–126, note 29) identified this *dpal bde mchog* as a Tibetan abbreviation of the title *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, not the *Cakrasaṃvara*, based on each tantra’s time of circulation.

¹³⁴ Davidson (2002a: 144) also traces this “gender-laden line of textual categories” in Jñānamitra’s *PŚT* in which the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures are assigned the status of mother for all the *buddhas*, whereas the *STTS* is the father. See the *PŚT* (274a1–2): *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad ’byung ba ’i yum shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la dpal dam pa phreng ba zhes bya ba ’di yin no || yum smos pa las na de bzhin gshegs pa ’i yab kyang smos dgos te gang zhe na | yab ni tantra ta ta tva saṃ gra ha | zhes bya ba sngags kyi mdo sde zab mo yin par ston to ||*.

upāyayānatantra, and instead positions the tantra beyond the category.¹³⁵ This indicates a nuanced flexibility in regard to the terminological usage as scriptural categorization was a moving target.

Grounded in the Yogatantra ritual developments, the *Guhyasamāja* does not systematically present in its main body (*mūlatantra*) the contemplative and yogic techniques, nor does it specify a dually structured practical package of *utpattikrama* and *utpanna-/niṣpanna-krama*. It is only in the final *Samājottara* Chapter – also known a supplementary tantra (*uttaratantra*) which originally existed independently and was later incorporated into the *Guhyasamāja* complex – that the various types of yogic techniques are synthesized into the framework of four limbs (*caturāṅga*),¹³⁶ with the dual stages of *utpattikrama* and *utpannakrama* praxes mentioned only in passing through a correlation with the Madhyamaka two truths respectively.¹³⁷ Considering that the composition of the body of explanatory tantras and exegetical works spawned by the *Guhyasamāja* extended through the Yogiñatantra phase and display the traits of mature and sophisticated subtle body praxes,¹³⁸ I will refrain from drawing on this sprawling literature to account for the

¹³⁵ The *GMT* places the root tantra *Guhyagarbha* even beyond the *Upāyayānatantra*, for it completes and joins the aims, causes and results of all the tantras. See the *GMT* (131a.5–6): *de la dpal gsang ba'i snying po 'di ni thams cad kyi don dang rgyu 'bras tshang zhing 'brel pa'i phyir | rgyud thams cad kyi spyi yin par gsungs so |*; c.f. Dalton 2005: 125. Furthermore, in the *GMT*'s later discussion of the *Guhyagarbha*'s internal classification scheme present in the root tantra's thirteenth chapter, Vilāsavajra explains that the realization of Atiyoga (supposedly represented by the root tantra itself) is built upon the previous two “inward” levels, that is, the Yoga and the Mahāyoga; see Dalton 2005: 128–130. In positioning the *Guhyagarbha* in the evolving canonical structure, Vilāsavajra's ambivalent attitude towards the Mahāyoga and clear vision of the root tantra's tie with the Atiyoga indicate a rising status of the still-emerging class of Atiyoga.

¹³⁶ See Szántó 2015a: 329.

¹³⁷ See Isaacson 2001: 468–469; c.f. Szántó 2015a: 329.

¹³⁸ The Jñānapāda tradition of the *Guhyasamāja* exegesis, for instance, set forth the *STTS* threefold meditation (*trisamādhi*) as the basic framework of the *utpattikrama* praxis and adopts the yoga of *bindu* or *tilaka* involving sexual union with a female consort for the *utpannakrama*

early meaning of Mahāyoga as a category when it first emerged as a rationale for associating a certain cluster of scriptures.

The precise nature of the relation between specific tantras as pieces of literature and on the other hand associated ritual practices remains obscure in terms of the “pre-codified” strata of Buddhist tantric development, because a given scripture would typically leave much of the ritual detail unspecified, such that ritual writers and enactors enjoyed quite considerable freedom in how they implemented an associated ritual agenda. Nonetheless, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*’s valorization of sexuality and transgression over celibacy and ethical constraint¹³⁹ offers us an important window to how the ritual innovations unfolded during the intermediate period of Indian Buddhist Tantra (late 8th through early 9th centuries) between the original articulation of deity yoga practice and the full-blown presentation of integrated generation and perfection practices. Moreover, the Dunhuang corpus of Tibetan tantric manuscripts bears abundant witnesses to this transitional phase characterized by the introduction of ritualized sexual and increasingly internal physiology-based practices.¹⁴⁰ As the Dunhuang manuscripts reveal, many ritual

praxis. As for the *utpannakrama* praxis of the Ārya school, the attainment of clear light (*prabhāsvara*) through manipulation of one’s wind energy (*vāyu*) is not taught in the root tantra itself. See Szántó 2015a: 329–330. This nicely illustrates that the distinction between the Mahāyoga and Yogiñāntara lines of development should not be arbitrarily taken as clearcut.

¹³⁹ The second chapter of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* emphasizes the deity yoga praxis and prefers the attainment of Buddhahood through sensual pleasure (*sukha*) over ethical restrictions. The third chapter of the tantra continues the idea of enjoying sensual pleasure with a discussion about the female consort. See Szántó 2015c: 370.

¹⁴⁰ Jacob Dalton (2004) brings attention to this long-overlooked transitional phase and observes that it have escaped the scholarly notice due to its being effaced by the later tradition. He further notes that “many tantras were reworked or supplemented by their proponents, to bring them up-to-date with the latest ritual technologies;” in this regard, the *Guhyasamāja* might be a best example with its so many “compositional strata.” Dalton proposes three means to overcome “the effacement of the intermediate period in the development of tantric practice:” textual critical analysis, the extra-canonical tantric collection and the Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts. The entire article is mainly devoted to recovering the newly formulated Mahāyoga ritual techniques from the

structures and paradigms at work in the so-called Kriyā- and Yoga-tantras came to be mapped onto the sexual anatomy of the practitioner. There is thus a departure from the early tantric forms as the practitioner now visualizes the *maṇḍala* at the point of sexual intercourse in the genitals and worships it by means of the sexual pleasure.¹⁴¹ As this ritual development gradually unfolded over the 9th century, an increasingly sophisticated map of physiological energies and processes occupies the ritual space of one's interior body.¹⁴² This opens up the next phase of ritual development in Buddhist Tantra.

3.1.2.1.2.2. Yoginītantra

The Yoginītantra – later known as “Mother Tantra” (*ma rgyud*) or *Prajñātantra (*shes rab kyi rgyud*) in the Tibetan Buddhist tantric taxonomy – refers to a class of Buddhist tantras displaying an increasing preoccupation with female divinities (called “yoginī” or “*ḍakinī*”) in the *maṇḍala* presentation, rather than the fivefold structure of male *buddhas* with or without their female consorts.¹⁴³ Representative of the burgeoning of Indian tantric Buddhism in its later phase, the Yoginītantra class was placed by Tibetan Buddhists atop the tantric doxography in parallel with the Father Tantra or *Upāyatantra derived from the Mahāyoga. As their respective names indicate, while the

Dunhuang Tibetan ritual manuals most of which subscribe to the *Guhyasamāja* and the *Guhyagarbha*. For a definition of *mahāyoga* at work in the Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts, see van Schaik 2008.

¹⁴¹ See Dalton 2004: 7–21.

¹⁴² See Dalton 2004: 21–26.

¹⁴³ See English 2002: 3–5. The Sanskrit term *yoginī-tantra* is attested in the colophon of the *Cakrasaṃvara* as the name of the textual class under which the tantra itself is subsumed. Meanwhile, the *Cakrasaṃvara* contains several references to a rival class called “Yogatantra,” which probably refers to tantras such as the *Guhyasamāja*; see Gray 2007: 5.

Father Tantra or *Upāyatantra is traditionally said to focus on the means (*upāya*) such as the technique of illusory body (*māyādeha*) on the generation phase, the Yogiṇī- or *Prajñā-tantra is considered to emphasize insight (*prajñā*) over means, especially the insight embodied by the luminous mind (*prabhāsvaracitta*).¹⁴⁴

The two most important *yogiṇītantras* are the *Hevajratantra* – also known as the *Hevajradākiṇījālasaṃvaratantra* – which concerns a cult of the wrathful Hevajra and his consort Nairātmyā, and the *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* – also known as the *Śrīherukābhidhāna* or *Cakrasaṃvara-laghutantra* – which figures as the center of a web of mutually referring scriptures concerned with the cult of Cakraśaṃvara and his consort Vajravārāhī. Both tantras probably took form towards the end of the 8th century.¹⁴⁵ A major textual source comes from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga* (its full title reads “*Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākiṇījālasaṃvara*”), the verses of which have been frequently incorporated – sometimes verbatim – in a host of *yogiṇītantras*.¹⁴⁶

The new class Yoganiruttaratantra surfaced to accommodate new ritual development – i.e., the *subtle body* yoga – in Buddhist Tantra originally developed in the Yogiṇītantras. Initially subsumed under the Mahāyoga class, Yoganiruttaratantra

¹⁴⁴ See Buswell & Lopez 2014: s.v. *māṭṛtantra*; *pitṛtantra*.

¹⁴⁵ The intertextual evidences Gray (2007: 11–14) provides lead us to date the *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* to the mid- to late 8th century. On the one hand, the tantra’s mention by name of several other tantras such as the *STTS*, *Guhyasamāja*, *Paramādyā* and *Samvara* (i.e. *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*) – whose dates range from the late-7th to mid-8th centuries – sets the *terminus post quem* to the mid-8th century. On the other, the tantra’s *terminus ante quem* could be established in the late 8th century in that quotations from the *Cakrasaṃvara* are found in the *Nāmasaṃgītiṅkā* by Vilāsavajra who was active during the mid- to late-8th century. Snellgrove (1959: 12–14) dates the *Hevajratantra* to the end of the 8th century based on Tāranātha’s historiographical accounts about Indian Buddhism. Davidson (2005: 41) dates the *Hevajratantra* to the turn of the 10th century (around 900 C.E.), however, without giving specific reasons.

¹⁴⁶ See Szántó 2015c: 369. The *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, classified as a **prajñānatantra* earlier by Vilāsavajra, is sometimes also considered as “proto-yogiṇītantra;” see Tomabechi 2007: 904.

gradually separated to become an independent class above Mahāyoga and eventually subsumed Mahāyoga as its own subclass.

An early dateable instance of Yoganiruttara as a tantric category is found in Śraddhākaravarma's *Yogānuttaratantrārthāvatārasaṃgraha* (late 10th century) in which Yoganiruttaratantra constitutes one subdivision of Mahāyoga in parallel with Yogottaratantra (*rnal 'byor mchog gi rgyud*).¹⁴⁷ The correlations Śraddhākaravarma has made of Yogottara with *Upāyatantra and Yoganiruttara with *Prajñātantra indeed shows an inheritance from the gender-laden categorization of tantras traceable earliest to Vilāsavajra's work (around the turn of the 9th century).¹⁴⁸ Thus, the Yoganiruttaratantra here is almost certainly equivalent with Yogiñtantra, which has been commonly classified as *Prajñātantra in Buddhist tantric taxonomies.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Śraddhākaravarma divides the Guhyamantra into four approaches to the Vajrayāna result: Kriyātantra, Caryātantra, Yogatantra and Mahāyogatantra; see the *YAS* (105b5): *gsang sngags 'bras bu rdo rje theg pa la ni 'jug pa'i sgo rnam bzhi ste | bya ba'i rgyud dang | spyod pa'i rgyud dang | rnal 'byor gyi rgyud dang | rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud ces spyir grags pa yin no |*. Among them, Mahāyoga is further subdivided into *Svabhāvatāntra (*rang bzhin gyi rgyud*) and *Prajñāptitantra (*btags pa'i rgyud*), the latter of which consists of *Upāyatantra and *Prajñānatantra, also known as Yogottaratantra and Yoganiruttaratantra respectively; see the *YAS* (106b3–5): *de la rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud ni rnam pa gnyis te | rang bzhin gyi [gyis] rgyud dang btags [brtag] pa'i rgyud do | ... btags pa'i rgyud kyang rnam gnyis te | rnal 'byor thabs kyi rgyud dang | rnal 'byor shes rab kyi rgyud do || de dag kyang rnam pa gnyis su 'dod do | rnal 'byor mchog gi rgyud dang | rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud ces bya ste |*; c.f. Dalton 2005: 155–156. Here we see again an Indic prototype of the tantric categorization into the *upāya* and *prajñā* types.

¹⁴⁸ C.f. note 134.

¹⁴⁹ The equivalence of Yoganiruttara (in contradistinction with Yogottara) with Yogiñtantra is confirmed elsewhere in Abhayākaragupta's (fl. late 11th through early 12th century) fivefold scheme of Kriyātantra, Caryātantra, Yogatantra, Yogottaratantra and Yoganiruttaratantra, the last one of which is identified with Yogiñtantra; see the *ĀM* (109a1–3): *dam pa'i chos phyi'i ni bya ba'i rgyud la sogs pa'o || de la de la bya ba'i rgyud ... spyod pa'i rgyud ... gsang ba ni rnal 'byor gyi rgyud la sogs pa ste | rnal 'byor gyi rgyud ni de kho na nyid 'dus pa la sogs pa'o || rnal 'byor bla ma'i rgyud ni 'dus pa la sogs pa'o || rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud ni rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud do ||*; c.f. Dalton 2005: 156, note 93.

In the 11th-century work of Ratnākaraśānti, we can trace a detachment of Yoganiruttara from Mahāyoga, such that Yoganiruttara arose as the fifth class above Mahāyoga as the fourth.¹⁵⁰ Elsewhere Ratnākaraśānti replaces Mahāyoga with Yogottara and in one instance replaces Yoganiruttara Yogiṇī.¹⁵¹ In any case, this fivefold classification scheme (Kriyā-Caryā-Yoga-Yogottara/Mahāyoga-Yoganiruttara/Yogiṇī) became current during the 11th century. At a certain point during the 11th through 12th centuries – probably in the hands of Tibetan tantric exegetes – the last two classes of the five were conflated into the Yoganiruttaratantra class, making *Upāyatantra/Father Tantra and *Prajñātantra/Mother Tantra respectively into its two primary subcategories. Mahāyogatantra – initially as a class subsuming the newly arising Yoganiruttaratantra – had now thus become subordinated under the latter as a subclass.

Now, thanks to the evolving Mahāyoga ritual development and the Yogiṇītantra input, three major tantric systems – the *Guhyasamāja*, the *Cakrasaṃvara* and the *Hevajra* – as received by the New Translation Tibetans from the late 11th century onwards combined to map out the practical landscape associated with “generating” within oneself an awakened identity surrounded by a *maṇḍala* of subordinate deities and “perfecting” one’s *subtle body* through yogic manipulations of the psycho-physiological processes. In addition, a sprawling literature of explanatory tantras, commentaries, and ritual manuals

¹⁵⁰ See the *TV* (103b7): *zab cing rgya che ba dang ldan pa 'i theg pa ni bya ba dang | spyod pa dang | rnal 'byor dang | rnal 'byor chen po dang | rnal 'byor bla na med pa zhes bya bas rnam pa lngar 'gyur ro ||*; c.f. Dalton 2005: 156, note 94.

¹⁵¹ In his *Śrīthevajrapañjikāmuktitāvali*, Ratnākaraśānti replaces Mahāyoga with Yogottara; see the *HM* (Tripathi & Negi 2001: 169; D 1189: 295b7–296a1). In the *Śrīvajramālāmahāyogatantraṭīkā*, Yoganiruttara is replaced with Yogiṇī; see the *VG* (3a2–3); c.f. Dalton 2005: 156–157, note 95.

with variations in semantic shaping emerged in India to contextualize and extend these scriptures.

3.2. Post-tantra: Mahāmudrā

Towards the later phase of Indian Buddhist Tantra, a discursive thread characteristic of a strong focus on naturalness and spontaneity became abstracted from the still evolving tantric matrices. Exerting a field of meaning outside of and beyond ritualized yogic practices – particularly sexual yoga – this Buddhist tantric naturalism had found expressions in a cluster of authorships and discursive traditions unified by a common ideological cast which posed itself as a critique of contrived processes including ritualism, yogic obsession, and scholastic involvement. This new trajectory could be described as “post-tantric” in its rhetorical detachment from – yet practical indebtedness to – the tantric norms of meaning and ritual.¹⁵²

Germano traces two spiritual sources for the post-tantric movements from within the immediate Buddhist tantric materials: the gnostic rhetoric and the “signless perfection phase” (*mtshan med rdzogs rim*) practice.¹⁵³ Both threads combined to mark “the

¹⁵² See Germano 2018: 34–36.

¹⁵³ The last phase of Indian Buddhist Tantra known under the “Yoganiruttaratantra” rubric organized various contemplative and yogic techniques into two types of “generation phase” and “perfection phase” praxes. This dyadic scheme reflected attempts to integrate the innovative *subtle body* techniques – which were introduced through the Yoganiruttara scriptural and rituals systems – into the practical norms of Buddhist Tantra as an advancement from the previously established *deity yoga* praxis. The “perfection phase” consists of two modes of contemplation: the symbolic type “with signs” (*mtshan bcas*) concerning the *subtle body* processes (i.e., *rtsa lung thig le*) and the non-symbolic type “without signs” (*mtshan med*) – consequent to the dissolution of the former – directing one at the nature of the mind utterly devoid of any imagery. See Germano 1994: 219–221.

seemingly most abstract and rarified” rhetoric divested “of all that contextualizes and accompanies” it and then presented as “that alone as a self-sufficient paradigm.”

Subsequent developments internal to this post-tantric ethos drove its own hypostatization into various religious formations, with the two most important exemplars being the rDzogs-chen and the Mahāmudrā traditions which spread from India through Tibet during the late 9th to 11th centuries. Both traditions exhibit a doxographical triumphalism claiming to be beyond sūtra and tantra, which is echoed by the common appellation of the term “great” (*mahā, chen po*) found in their rubrics of self-identification. Moreover, the two post-tantric traditions of rDzogs-chen and Mahāmudrā have often been associated with an exoteric philosophical tradition of Great Madhyamaka (*dbu ma chen po*), thus making a triad of “Three Greats” (*chen po gsum*), which have been referred to in the Tibetan Buddhist literature as a common paradigm – either in critical or celebratory terms – since the 11th century onwards.¹⁵⁴

This distinction between practices with and without imagery finds expressions in the earlier Kriyā, Caryā and Yoga tantric systems, in which the contrast is made, however, between the deity yoga and the subsequent emptiness contemplation aimed at the dissolution of the former; see Hopkins 1987: 189–203. Beyer (1973: 132–135) discusses the distinction in the Yoganiruttara context and characterizes the “*signless* Process of Perfection” as “the ‘gathering in’ of the body of the god and ‘arising’ therewith from the Clear Light of Emptiness” (*bsdu ldang*). Beyer further comments that the experiences brought by the physical yoga praxis (i.e., those “with signs”) were not taken as ends in themselves in the domain of Buddhist Tantra, but rather “as possible magical simulcra within the body for the attainment of the rapture of enlightenment;” “to the intellectual categories of Emptiness they added the experiential dimensions of Great Bliss and Clear Light, always warning that bliss or light without Emptiness was simple sensual indulgence.” C.f. Germano 1994: 222–223, note 45.

¹⁵⁴ See Germano 2018: 31.

3.2.1. Canonical references to mahāmudrā and its semantic evolution

Best translated as “great seal” from Sanskrit, *mahāmudrā* is in and of itself a multivalent term with semantic variations across systems and over time. The term *mudrā* as applied in the Buddhist ritual context fundamentally refers to a hand-gesture which “seals” ritual procedures. The combination of *mudrā* (seal) with *mahā* (great) has indicated a soteriological significance since its initial application in Buddhist Tantra.

In the Buddhist tantric landscape prior to the flourishing of Yogiñītantra, the meaning of *mahāmudrā* – usually associated with the *deity yoga* praxis – was derived from its encapsulation of a *buddha* or tutelary deity’s divine form or awakened principle. As early as the formative phase of tantric Buddhism around the turn of the 7th century, *mahāmudrā* appeared in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (late 6th/early 7th century) as a technical term referring to a “five-peak” gesture (*pañcaśikhā-mudrā*) which embodies all the mundane and supramundane attainments of Mañjuśrī.¹⁵⁵ In the Yogatantra context, *mahāmudrā* – though occasionally appearing as the deity’s hand-gesture – is more often linked with the other three in a set of four *mudrās* which “seals,” or confirms, the practitioner’s self-identification with a *buddha*’s divine form in the *deity yoga* visualization praxis.¹⁵⁶ When it comes to the Mahāyoga context, the representative and

¹⁵⁵ See the *MMK* (2.26.15–17): *āryamañjuśriyaṃ nāma mudrā pañcaśikhā mahāmudreti vikhyātā taṃ prayojaye asmin mūlamantre sarvakarmikaṃ bhavati hṛdayaṃ*. For a detailed description of the *pañcaśikhāmudrā*, see the *MMK* (35.358.24–359.8); c.f. Wallis 238–239, note 49.

¹⁵⁶ For instance, in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, *mahāmudrā* is placed in a lowest position in the four-*mudrā* series, the other three being the *karma*-, *dharmā*-, and *samaya*-*mudrās*; see Weinberg 2003: 44–45. Giebel (2001: 11) summaries each of the four *mudrā*-types into which one is initiated in the “Vajradhātu” (*rdo rje dbyings*, *jingang jie* 金剛界) *maṇḍala*: 1) *mahāmudrā* (*phyag rgya chen po*) corresponds to “the images of the deities as they are visualized in their physical form;” 2) *samayamudrā* (*dam tshig gi phyag rgya*) is “in the sense of hand gestures and considered to represent both a ‘coming together’ (*samaya*) of the deity and practitioner and the respective ‘pledge’ (*samaya*) of the individual deities;” 3) *dharmamudrā* (*chos kyi phyag rgya*) is

most influential tantra is the *Guhyasamāja*, which presents *mahāmudrā* in multiple semantic registers, including as the spiritual principle which respectively encapsulates the five-family *tathāgatas*; derivative from that, it is also presented as a meditative procedure which secures the attainment of each *tathāgata*'s body, speech, and mind; and finally as a term it can even signify a sexual consort.¹⁵⁷

In the profoundly gnostic Yogiṅtantra, *mahāmudrā*, however, rose to central philosophical and soteriological importance. In spite of sporadic “generation phase” references to *mahāmudrā* as a specific sealing procedure (though now the highest in the sequence), the term is more closely associated with the “perfection phase” manipulation of psycho-physiological energies so as to reveal – or produce – a divine *subtle body* form and a blissful, luminous, and non-conceptual gnosis.¹⁵⁸ Both the *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra* systems contain references to *mahāmudrā* as a sexual consort.¹⁵⁹ However, it is clear that the *Hevajra* use of the term as “a sexual consort” is only derivative – through synecdoche – from its associations with the “bliss” (*sukha*, *bde ba*) experienced through union with the consort.¹⁶⁰ In the *Kālacakra* which emerged in the 11th century,

“expressed in the form of incantatory formulae (*mantra*) or seed-syllables (*bīja*)” and represents “the verbal counterparts of the deities;” and 4) *karmamudrā* (*las kyi phyag rgya*) symbolizes “the activities characteristic of each deity.”

¹⁵⁷ See the *GS*: 1 (Fremantle 1971: 182–185; 30–31); 3.3–5 (Fremantle 1971: 196; 37); 10.21 (Fremantle 1971: 240; 58).

¹⁵⁸ See Jackson 2005: 5598.

¹⁵⁹ The *mahāmudrā* appearing in the thirty-third chapter of the *Cakrasaṃvara* was read by commentators as a sexual consort; see Gray (2007: 150; 306–307, note 8). The *Hevajratantra* treats *mahāmudrā* in its conventional form (*saṃvṛtyākārarūpa*, *kun rdzob kyi gzugs*) as a consort; see the *HV*: 2.8.1–5 (Snellgrove 1959a: 116).

¹⁶⁰ See, for instance, the *HV*: 2.4.50 (Snellgrove 1959a: 105). Elsewhere the consort is described as the giver of the Mahāmudrā bliss (*mahāmudrāsukhaṃdadā*, *phyag rgya che bde ba sbyin pa*); see the *HV*: 2.4.43 (Snellgrove 1959a: 105). It is also specified that the Mahāmudrā bliss is located in the navel *cakra*; see the *HV* (2.4.40; Snellgrove 1959a: 104): *tasya saukhyam mahāmudrā saṃsthitā nābhimaṇḍale* (*de nyid bde ba phyag rgya che | lte ba 'i dkyil 'khor nyid du*

mahāmudrā was similarly elevated to connote a direct realization of the nature of reality – or the mind achieved through the yogic path – and sometimes was even treated as synonymous with ultimacy itself. In particular, *mahāmudrā* is described as bringing forth the eternal bliss beyond conceptual meditation and even as equivalent with the *buddha*'s gnosis.¹⁶¹

The sexual connotation of *mahāmudrā* in the *yogiṅītantras* led tantric exegetes to equate it with the co-emergent joy (*sahajānanda*), a transcending experience sprung from the *sexual yoga* practice. The ecstatic differentiation of the *sexual yoga* experience and its eventual association with *sahaja* first emerged in the *Dvikramatattvabhāvanā-mukhāgama* of Buddhajñānapāda, the initiator of the Jñānapāda tradition of *Guhyasamāja*. The *Mukhāgama* trifurcates the sexual experience into joy (*ānanda*), middling joy (*madhyamānanda*), and joy of cessation (*viramānanda*), and adds a co-emergent gnosis (*sahajajñāna*) as a transcendent fourth.¹⁶² The three joys and co-emergent gnosis were thus synthesized in the *Hevajratantra* into a fourfold scheme, with nominal variations such as *sahajānanda* in replacement of *sahajajñāna*.¹⁶³ Two versions of ordering exist within the *Hevajra*, with the *sahaja* joy placed either atop the

gnas //). Another derivative meaning of *mahāmudrā* from “the bliss” is “an initiatory rite” (*mahāmudrābhīṣeka*, *phyag rgya chen por dbang bskur*) intended for the generation of that bliss; see 2.2.31 (Snellgrove 1959a: 91).

¹⁶¹ See the *KC*: 1.12–13 (Newman 1987: 224); 1.41 (Newman 1987: 231).

¹⁶² Davidson 2002b: 60–61.

¹⁶³ The lines 25–36 of the “*yogiṅī-cakra*” chapter (1.8) constitute the *locus classicus* taken by exegetes for the development of the *Sahaja* practice and doctrine in relation to the ecstatic experience engendered by the *sexual yoga* praxis. For an English translation of the verses, see Davidson 2002b: 63.

experiential hierarchy or as the third one along the temporal gradation of ecstasy.¹⁶⁴

While not directly specified in the root tantra, the correlation of *mahāmudrā* – the spiritual outcome and goal of the *sexual yoga* praxis in the *Hevajra* – with *sahajānanda* was made explicit in exegetical works. Concomitantly, the four-*mudrā* set found in materials as early as the *STTS* was further brought into correlation with the four-joy list as well as other schemes at work in the *Hevajra* environment, either scriptural or commentarial.¹⁶⁵ As such, the relationship of *mahāmudrā* to interior yogic practice was strengthened through an association with the psycho-physiological processes defined by schemes such as four joys or four *cakras*.

As *sahaja* diverged from significations for ecstasy and became as much a locus of synthesis as a cipher for absolute being,¹⁶⁶ *mahāmudrā* underwent a similar semantic transformation, that is, finding its application in the conceptual field denoting an absolute level of reality or its cognitive component, nondual gnosis. It was at this point that *mahāmudrā* became Mahāmudrā, an central topic becoming a full-fledged body of the Buddhist practices and doctrines.

¹⁶⁴ Each series potentially evolving separately, the precise placement or relationship of *sahaja* to these groupings became a contentious issue. For a chart on the locations and specific arrangements of different four-joy schemes in the *Hevajra*, see Davidson 2002b: 64. Snellgrove (1959a: 35) speculates that the different arrangements might indicate “a sign of mixed origins.” He further adds that “the placing of the Joy Innate (author: *sahajānanda*) as third is, however, in direct analogy with the ritualistic embrace and actual experience. As third, it is followed by the Joy called cessation, which is a return to normal experience.”

¹⁶⁵ The new schematism displays a departure from the classical Yogatantra four-*mudrā* set in terms of both ordering and specific significations of each individual *mudrā*; See Snellgrove 1959a: 136–137; 2002: 248–249.

¹⁶⁶ Emerging as an adjective in the four-joy scheme, *sahaja* displays a tendency towards nominalization in its specific usage in the *Hevajra*, first as “shorthand for *sahajānanda* or *sahajajñāna*,” later as an overarching concept applied to all the levels including *sahajānanda* itself; see Davidson 2002b: 65–66.

3.2.2. The Mahāmudrā movement in the siddha environment

It was primarily in the interpretative hands of the siddhas dedicated to the Mahāyoga- and Yoginī-tantras that Mahāmudrā became a central topic of discourse. Many siddhas resorted to the Yoganiruttaratantra corpus as a reference point for their yogic praxis and thus approached Mahāmudrā – alongside the *sahaja* notion– as the center of their conceptual world. Employed in its initial genesis as ritual terminology, *mahāmudrā* gradually evolved to become one of the great sources for philosophical directions in association with an expanding rhetorical configuration of such terms as “natural,” “innate,” “empty,” and other synonyms. Accorded the highest regards in the ontological, gnoseological, and soteriological terms all at once, Mahāmudrā as presented in the siddha literature connotes the nature of reality or the mind, the gnosis that realizes that nature, and the yogic and contemplative path that navigates one to that realization. While the usages of the term *mahāmudrā* appear deeply tantric when related to the “perfection phase” practices and attainments, it also evokes non-tantric philosophical concepts such as emptiness, mind-only, and buddha-nature. As such, Mahāmudrā is often read in this exalted sense back into earlier texts, and celebrated as the peak of Buddhist doctrine and praxis.¹⁶⁷

There had been ongoing Tibetan attempts since as early as the 14th century to trace a Mahāmudrā “canon” from the tantric siddhas’ works preserved in the bsTan-’gyur (collection of translated Indian treatises). Admittedly, the bibliographical identifications and organizations might involve anachronistic readings of works and concepts yet to be

¹⁶⁷ See Jackson 2005: 5597.

consciously Mahāmudrā, and even marginalize threads and developmental lines peripheral – or even oblivious – to the Tibetan memory. However, due to the paucity of directly Indian references, we have no other options but to rely on this “canon” to trace the developing Mahāmudrā discourses in India as well as the broader post-tantric developments to which Mahāmudrā was indebted, so long as we keep in mind these sources and their grouping is influenced by Tibetan perspectives.

3.2.2.1. A Mahāmudrā “canon”

In their efforts to trace a scriptural foundation for the purposes of legitimatizing their own Mahāmudrā tradition, from at least the 14th century Tibetan bKa’-brgyud scholars tried to identify Mahāmudrā works from the bsTan-’gyur canon of translated Indian treatises and compile them into distinctive corpora and cycles. The origin of this bibliographic taxonomy of Indian Mahāmudrā works is first traceable to Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub’s (1290–1364) record of received teachings (*gsan yig*), in which he classified the Mahāmudrā teachings he had received from his teacher Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho (b. 13th century) within the Yoganiruttara cycle (*rnal ’byor bla med kyi skor*).¹⁶⁸ The entire Yoganiruttara cycle in the *Bu ston gsan yig* can be divided into five sections: Advayatantra (*gnyis med rgyud*), Father Tantra (*pha rgyud*), Mother Tantra (*ma rgyud*), Mahāmudrā, and Tārā (*sgrol ma*).

¹⁶⁸ See the *Bu gsan*: 58a4–59a1.

The Mahāmudrā section organizes the Tibetan titles translated from the Indian works into three cycles:¹⁶⁹ seven works belonging to the “Mahāmudrā Scriptural Cycle of the Lineage” (*brgyud pa 'i phyag rgya chen po gzhung gi skor*) which provide expositions of Yoganiruttara themes,¹⁷⁰ six works belonging to the “Quintessence Cycle” (*snying po skor*) which contain quintessential instructions on Mahāmudrā by Saraha and his spiritual heirs,¹⁷¹ and twenty-six works belonging to the “Amanasikāra Cycle” (*a ma na si ka ra 'i skor*) which contain Maitrīpa’s Mahāmudrā treatises and his disciples’ commentaries.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ According to the *Blue Annals*, most of the works from these three corpora were covered by a list of tantric works taught by Vajrapāṇi to his Tibetan disciples during his stay in Nepal towards the late 11th century; see the *Deb sngon*: 1000.17–1002.1; Roerich 2016: vol. 2, 856–857.

¹⁷⁰ The seven works are: 1. *Guhyasiddhi* (*gSang ba grub pa*, agent: Padmavajra, D 2217); 2. *Prajñopayavinīscayasiddhi* (*Thabs dang shes rab rnam par gtan la dbab pa grub pa*, agent: Anaṅgavajra, D 2218); 3. *Jñānasiddhi* (*Ye shes grub pa*, agent: Indrabhūti, D 2219); 4. *Advayasiddhi* (*gNyis med grub pa*, agent: Lakṣmī, D 2220); 5. *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* (*dNgos po gsal ba 'i rjes su 'gro ba 'i de kho na nyid grub pa*, agent: Sahajayoginī Tsi-ti, D 2222; attributed to Vilāsavajra in the bsTan-'gyur); 6. *Sahajasiddhi* (*lHan cig skyes pa grub pa*, agent: Ḍombī Heruka, D 2223); 7. *Mahāguhyatattvopadeśa* (*gSang ba chen po 'i de kho na nyid kyi man ngag*, agent: Dārika, D 2221). See the *Bu gsan*: 58a4–7.

¹⁷¹ The six works are: 1. *Dohākośagīti* (*Do hā mdzod kyi glu*, agent: Saraha, D 2224); 2. *Caturmudrānvaya* (*Phyag rgya bzhi rjes su bstan pa*, agent: Nāgārjuna, D 2225); 3. *Acintyakramopadeśa* (*bSam gyis mi khyab pa 'i rim pa 'i man ngag*, agent: Koṭali, D 2228); 4. *Cittāvaraṇaviśodhana* (*Sems kyi sgrib pa rnam par sbyong ba*, agent: Āryadeva, D 1804); 5. *Prajñājñānaprakāśa* (*Shes rab ye shes gsal ba*, agent: Devācandra, alias Śūnyatāsamādhi, D 2226); 6. *Sthitisamuccaya* (*gNas pa bsdu pa*, agent: Sahajavajra, D 2227). See the *Bu gsan*: 58a7–b1.

¹⁷² The Amanasikāra cycle consists of two divisions: Maitrīpa’s works which contains twenty-two titles and the *bKa' bskul gyi chos bzhi* collection which contains four titles composed by Maitrīpa’s disciples. In addition, a synopsis stating the gist or purpose of the work is provided ahead of each title. Maitrīpa’s works include: 1. *Amanasikārādhāra* (*Yid la mi byed pa ston pa*, D 2249); 2. *Kudrṣṭinirghātana* (*lTa ba ngan pa sel ba*, D 2229); 3. *Tattvaratnāvalī* (*De kho na nyid rin po che 'i phreng ba*, D 2240); 4. *Madhyamaṣaṭka* (*dBu ma drug pa*, D 2230); 5. *Sahajaṣaṭka* (*lhan cig skyes pa drug pa*, D 2232); 6. *Svapnanirdeśa* (*rMi lam nges par bstan pa*, D 2233); 7. *Māyānirukti* (*sGyu ma nges par bstan pa*, D 2234); 8. *Apratiṣṭhānaprakāśa* (*Rab tu mi gnas pa gsal bar bstan pa*, D 2235); 9. *Tattvadaśaka* (*De kho na nyid bcu pa*, D 2236); 10. *Yuganaddhaprakāśa* (*Zung du 'jug pa rab tu gsal bar bstan pa*, D 2237); 11. *Premapañcaka* (*dGa' gcugs lnga pa*, D 2237); 12. *Nirvedhapañcaka* (*Mi phyed pa lnga pa*, D 2238); 13. *Mahāsukhaprakāśa* (*bDe ba chen po gsal ba*, D 2239); 14. *Tattvaparakāśa* (*De kho na nyid rab tu bstan pa*, D 2241); 15. *Mahāyānaviṃśikā* (*Theg pa chen po nyi shu pa*, D 2248); 16. *Tattvaviṃśikā* (*De kho na nyid theg pa chen po nyi shu pa*, D 2250); 17. *Pañcatathāgatamudrāvivarāṇa* (*De bzhin gshegs pa lnga 'i phyag rgya rnam par bshad pa*, D

This threefold scheme became a bibliographical norm in the Tibetan “canon” of translated Indian Mahāmudrā works.

The seventh Karma-pa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho (1454–1506) expanded Bu-ston’s bibliographic taxonomy of Mahāmudrā by identifying additional Indian Mahāmudrā works from the bsTan-’gyur and then compiled this expanded corpus under the rubric *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* (Indian Mahāmudrā Scriptures). The dPal-spungs xylographic edition of the *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* now exists in photostatic reproduction as the first three volumes of a thirteen-volume collection *Nges don phyag rgya chen po’i khrid mdzod* which contains Indian and Tibetan Mahāmudrā works.¹⁷³ The third volume opens in independent folio numbering with a 42-folio text *sGrub brgyud grub pa’i rna rgyan* (*Earrings Decorating the Accomplishment of the Practice Lineage*, “Earrings” hereafter) attributed to Karma bKra-shis-chos-’phel (fl. 19th century).¹⁷⁴ The *Earrings* not only informs us of how the works were compiled by Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho and put to block print, it also offers an inventory of the three-volume collection.

2242); 18. *Dohānidhināmatattvopadeśa* (*Do hā ti zhes bya ba de kho na nyid kyi man ngag*, D 2247); 19. *Vajrasattvapañcākāra* (*rDo rje sems dpa’i rang bzhin lnga pa*, D 2245); 20. *Sekatātparyasaṃgraha* (*dBang gi dgos pa mdor bsdu pa*, D 2243); 21. *Sekaprakṛta*; 22. *Sekanirdeśa* (*dBang bskur nges par bstan pa*, D 2252). The *bKa’ bskul gyi chos bzhi* includes: 1. *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* (*dBang bskur nges bstan gyi ’grel pa*, agent: Rāmapāla, D 2253); 2. *Tattvadaśakaṭikā* (*De kho na nyid bcu pa’i rgya cher ’grel pa*, agent: Sahajavajra, D 2254); 3. *Kudṛṣṭinirghātanasmṛti* (*lTa ba ngan sel gyi dran pa*, agent: Vajrapāṇi); 4. *Vajrapāda* (*rDo rje tshig*, agent: Vajrapāṇi, D 2255). See the *Bu gsan*: 58b1–59a1. Most works listed here have available Sanskrit equivalent in the *Avdayavajrasaṃgraha* Collection; see Mathes 2015.

¹⁷³ See Mathes 2011: 90.

¹⁷⁴ The full title of the texts is “A brief inventory of how the three-volume collection of Indian scriptures on the Mahāmudrā which is the abiding nature of reality has been put together as a literary source: *Earrings decorating the accomplishment of the practice lineage*” (*gNas lugs phyag rgya chen po’i rgya gzhung glegs bam gsum yi ge’i ’byung gnas su ji ltar bkod pa’i dkar chags bzhugs byang mdor bsdu pa sgrub brgyud grub pa’i rna rgyan*).

The first volume of the *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* – despite the insertion of a bKa’-’gyur work *Anāvilatantrarāja* (*rGyud rgyal rnyog pa med pa*, D 414) along with its bsTan-’gyur commentary *Anāvilanāmatantrapañjikā* (*dPal rnyog pa med pa zhes bya ba’i rgyud kyi ’grel pa*, D 1204) at the beginning of the sequence – mostly reflect the Bu-ston list in both titles and bibliographic taxonomy. Although it does not contain any explicit references to the threefold classification, the ordering of titles clearly reflects the compiler’s awareness of the three-corpus taxonomy. Moreover, the *Earrings* explicitly structures the listing of the first-volume titles (except the first two) into three corpora that closely follow Bu-ston’s three classifications, namely the “Seven Works on Siddhi” (*grub pa sde bdun*),¹⁷⁵ the “Six Cycles on Quintessence” (*snying po skor drug*),¹⁷⁶ and the “Twenty-five Cycles on Amanasikāra” (*yid la mi byed pa’i chos skor nyi shu rtsa lnga*).¹⁷⁷ However, variations in terms of title and ordering within each corpus the *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* list displays as compared with the Bu-ston list discloses that Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho might have accessed a different bibliographical source than Bu-ston or made adjustments for his own reasons.

¹⁷⁵ See the *gNas rna*: 21b6–22b1. The title of the corpus is now changed to the “Seven Works on Siddhi,” and the order of the sixth and seventh titles in the Bu-ston list now are reversed. Besides, the fifth work is attributed to Vilāsavajra, which is in line with the bsTan-’gyur attribution, though with a somewhat shortened title “*dNgos po gsal ba’i de kho na nyid grub pa*.” The *Bu ston gsan yig* entry of the fifth work – i.e., a full title “*dNgos po gsal ba’i rjes su ’gro ba’i de kho na nyid grub pa*” attributed to Sahajayoginī Tsi-to – is moved by bKra-shis-chos-’phel beyond the list of seven and counts as the eighth one. Keeping to the sense that the lineal succession fits into the bibliographical enumeration, the *Earrings* reveals a different version of lineage transmission than the *Bu ston gsan yig*. However, the *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* corpus contains only seven titles, and the fifth reads “*gos po gsal ba’i rjes su ’gro ba’i de kho na nyid grub pa*.”

¹⁷⁶ See the *gNas rna*: 22b1–4. The third title *Acintyakramopadeśa* in the Bu-ston list is now moved to the end as the sixth.

¹⁷⁷ See the *gNas rna*: 22b4–23a4. The difference of bibliographical order and content between the *Bu ston gsan yig* and *rNa rgyan* lists are remarkable, about which I will refrain from giving a comprehensive account. For a detailed discussion, see Mathes 2011: 96–97; 2015: 4–6.

As Karma bKra-shis-chos-'phel observes, the “Seven Works on Siddhi” picks up themes from the Yoganiruttara cycle of Buddhist Tantra and presents philosophical and poetic expositions of them.¹⁷⁸ Mentioned only occasionally throughout the entire corpus, the term *mahāmudrā* usually denotes various dimensions of ultimate reality such as non-dual awareness, the nature of mind, and *dharmakāya*. In addition, the corpus embeds a tantric siddha transmission of Mahāmudrā within the bibliographical enumeration in that each work’s author is identified as the disciple of the author of the previous work in the list. As such, the listing reflects a temporal line of doctrinal development, with each text building upon its predecessor and setting forth a foundation for its successor to follow.¹⁷⁹ Due to the slight difference of listing between the *Bu ston gsan yig* and the *Earrings*, there are two versions of the “Seven Works on Siddhi” lineage:

Bu ston gsan yig: 1. Padmavajra; 2. Anaṅgavajra; 3. Indrabhūti; 4. Lakṣmī; 5.

Sahajayogiṇī Tsi-ti; 6. Ḍombī Heruka; and 7. Dārika;

Earrings: 1. Padmavajra; 2. Anaṅgavajra; 3. Indrabhūti; 4. Lakṣmī; 5. Vilāsavajra;

6. Dārika; Ḍombī Heruka; and 7. Sahajayogiṇī Tsi-nto.¹⁸⁰

Kun-dga'-rin-chen's (1475–1527) catalog (*dkar chag*) of the three Mahāmudrā corpora – which is included in the *ka* volume of the *'Bri gung chos mdzod* along with the works from the *Grub pa sde bdun*, *sNying po skor gsum*, and *Yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor* –

¹⁷⁸ See the *gNas rna* (21b6): *rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud sde thams cad kyi don gyi snying po phyung ba grub pa sde bdun ni |*; c.f. Mathes 2015: 2, note 7.

¹⁷⁹ The sense of lineage in the teacher-disciple relationship among authors is broached in the *Earrings*. The *Bu ston gsan yig* only reveals the succession of seven works in terms of content; see the *Bu gsan* (58a7): *snga ma snga mas phyi ma phyi ma'i don du mdzad | phyi ma phyi mas snga ma snga ma'i gzhung nyams myong la brten nas mdzad ces grag go ||*.

¹⁸⁰ The *Earrings* identifies both Dārika and Ḍombī Heruka as Vilāsavajra's disciples, and Sahajayogiṇī Tsi-nto as Dārika's disciple; see the *gNas rna*: 22a4–5.

additionally mentions that these seven authors were from Uḍḍiyāna (*u rgyan*) to the northwest of India.¹⁸¹

The “Six Cycles on Quintessence” constitutes the Mahāmudrā teachings represented by Saraha (9th–10th century?) and his spiritual heirs.¹⁸² Mathes (2015) gives a brief overview of each of the six works:¹⁸³

To explain briefly their different points of view, it was in his dohas that Saraha launched what was later called *mahāmudrā*, describing unconventional techniques (he was critical not only of traditional forms of Buddhism, but also of the tantras) for experiencing the co-emergent (Author: i.e., *sahaja*) nature of mind. The **Prajñājñānaprakāśa* presents *mahāmudrā* in the context of the four seals. While *Divākaracandra (one of the four heart disciples of Maitripa; Author: alias Devacandra) argues in his “Elucidation of *Prajñā* Wisdom” that *mahāmudrā* must be preceded by a kind of preliminary wisdom attained with the help of a tantric consort (i.e., a *prajñā*), Maitripa’s disciple *Sahajavajra suggests in his **Tattvadaśakaṭikā* the

¹⁸¹ See the *Grub snying yig* (4a2): *sngags kyi bstan pa’i thog mar nub phyogs u rgyan nas dar bas yul de’i slob dpon rnamz kyi phyag rgya chen po’i gzhung mdzad pa la grub pa’i tha snyad sbyar ba bdun byung ba ni ...* |; c.f. Mathes 2011: 94, note 18.

¹⁸² Kun-dga’-rin-chen points out in his catalogue of the three Mahāmudrā corpora that the “Six Cycles on Quintessential Meaning” consists of the Mahāmudrā teaching disseminated by Saraha and his followers Nāgārjuna and Śavaripa as well as their disciples; see the *Grub snying yig* (4a4): *bram ze chen po sa ra ha lho bal gyi ri la byon nas bzhugs pa dang | de’i rjes su klu grub yab sras | ri khrod yab sras byon nas phyag rgya chen po la snying rje don gyi tha snyad dar bas ...* |. The “Six Cycles on Quintessence” authors are Saraha, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Devacandra, Sahajavajra, and Koṭali. Among them, *klu [s]grub yab sras* should refer to both Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva who represent the Ārya commentarial tradition of the *Guhyasamājatantra*. According to some Tibetan accounts, this tantric Nāgārjuna received both the Mother Tantra and Father Tantra initiations – namely those of *Samvara* and *Guhyasamāja* – from Saraha, and Āryadeva is his *Guhyasamāja* disciple; see Dowman 1986: 120. Devacandra and Sahajavajra are among the four great disciples of Maitrīpa who himself obtained the Mahāmudrā teaching from Śavaripa (alias Ri-khrod-pa), a disciple of Saraha. As for Koṭali, his connection with the Saraha-Maitrīpa circle is relatively vague based on the currently available Buddhist siddha historiographies.

¹⁸³ See Mathes 2015: 3–4.

possibility of an alternative approach, claiming that there is a *mahāmudrā* practice independent of the sequence of the four seals. The works by the Mahāsiddhas Āryadeva and Koṭali do not support such a Pāramitānaya-based *mahāmudrā*, and in the last work, by *Sahajavajra, true reality is either approached through Madhyamaka analysis or experienced directly according to the tradition of Mantranaya.

The whole corpus reflects a questioning about how Mahāmudrā is related to tantra and sūtric or *pāramitā* systems, and even to raise the possibility of a the Mahāmudrā tradition beyond both tantra and sūtra.

The Amanasikāra corpus comprises Maitrīpa’s works together with four commentaries made by his disciples. Exploiting tantric concepts and terminology in generally sūtric philosophical expositions, the corpus shows a further synthesis of the new tantric teachings and yogic techniques brought in by the siddhas with mainstream Mahāyāna Buddhism. The major contributions of Maitrīpa as well as his disciples lay in their blending the essence and tantric Mahāmudrā teachings of Saraha, Nāgārjuna and Śavarīpa with the Apratiṣṭhāna brand of Madhyamaka philosophy. The goal is a direct realization of emptiness as naturally luminous through “not becoming mentally engaged” (*amanasikāra, yid la mi byed pa*) with the subject-object dichotomy.¹⁸⁴

3.2.2.2. The siddha sociology and Mahāmudrā transmissions

Before turning to the three interconnected lines – or clusters – of Mahāmudrā transmission which found their ways to the Tibetan bKa’-brgyud domain, I first briefly

¹⁸⁴ See Mathes 2015: 1. For case studies of individual works from the Amanasikāra corpus, see Mathes 2006, 2007 and 2009.

introduce the textual corpus of Indian and Indo-Tibetan works through which we gain the most immediate access to the collective personality and spirituality of the siddhas, an environment which gave birth to the Mahāmudrā ethos and expressions.

3.2.2.2.1. The siddha society: a collective mythology

From the early 8th century onwards, the tantric adepts known as the siddha captured the Buddhist imagination in North India and the Himalayan region. As a new form of Buddhist personality that began on the periphery of – or even outside – the Buddhist institutional world, siddha brought to table rhetorics and tales of sexuality and eroticism, and displayed an extraordinary diversity in background, activity, and orientation. For instance, while some siddhas were obsessed with maintaining a unique anti- or non-institutional order, others attempted its domestication into monastic syllabi. A limited number of figures pursued both tasks. Eventually working its way into the heart of Buddhist institutions, the Buddhist siddha movement sustained its ideological grounds through a vast literature known under such rubrics as “Mahāyoga” and “Yogiñtantra,” which reflected concerns as diverse as the siddhas themselves.¹⁸⁵

Despite our limited understanding of the siddhas’ historical and sociological realities due to the insufficiency of literary records, their religious culture can be partially retrieved through analysis of hagiographical writings, yogic lineage accounts, and compiled songs of realization (*dohā*). A typical corpus serving this purpose is the *Cycle*

¹⁸⁵ In Chapters 5 through 7 of *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A social history of the tantric movement* (2002), Davidson offers a profound description and interpretation of the Buddhist siddha movement in relation to the religio-political situations of early medieval Indian history, which includes its ideological landscape, literary process, and interaction and negotiation with the institutional monk.

of *Blessings of the Eighty-four Indian Mahāsiddhas* (*rGya gar grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i byin brlabs chos skor*, “Cycle” hereafter) preserved in the *bsTan-'gyur* and several other collections.¹⁸⁶ Revolving around the eighty-four siddhas between the 8th and 12th centuries, the *Cycle* preserves legendary accounts of their lives, songs of their realization, and commentary on the songs.¹⁸⁷ It made its way to Tibet and Tibetan through the translation efforts of the Indian teacher Abhayadattaśrī (fl. late 11th/early 12th century) – probably alias Abhayākaragupta (d. c. 1125), a disciple of Vajrāsana who is one of the last siddhas flourishing in the 11th century – and his Tangut disciple sMon-grub-shes-rab probably during the early 12th century.¹⁸⁸

Three important works included in the *Cycle* are (1) the hagiography collection *Caturaśītisiddhapravṛtti* (*Grub thob brgyad bcu rtsa bzhi'i lo rgyud*, “Legends of the Eighty-four Siddhas,” “*Legends*” hereafter),¹⁸⁹ (2) the anthology

¹⁸⁶ For the recensional information of the *Cycle*'s different editions, see Dowman 1986: 384; also see Kapstein 2000.

¹⁸⁷ Dasgupta (1946) attributes eighty-four to a “mystical number” for groupings in Indian religious traditions. Kapstein (2000: 54–55) discusses the number from a numerological perspective that it “encompasses the range of possible relationships obtaining among the innumerable magical and natural categories involving threes and fours.” Davidson (2002a: 308–309) links the Buddhist tantric usage of the number eighty-four with the “economic and political organization of Indian villages” back in the medieval India, and suggests that the numeric application has both religious and political significance.

¹⁸⁸ See Dowman 1986: 384–385; Kapstein 2006: 26. Dowman suggests an identification of Abhayadattaśrī with Abhayākaragupta, a prolific writer affiliated with the Vikramaśīla Academy and living in the 11th and 12th centuries. He also makes the assumption that the Tangut (*mi nyag pa*) sMon-grub-shes-rab might be the famous Tsa-mi Sangs-rgyas-grags-pa, a well-known Sanskritist and a translator of the *Kālacakratantra*; see Dowman 1986: 385–386.

¹⁸⁹ Davidson (2002a: 170) observes that scholars' excessive reliance on this text as a reference to the siddhas' history and activity has more or less fixated people's impression and imagination of the Buddhist siddha on a romantic image of self-absorbed saintly persona. Furthermore, Davidson (2002a: 305–307) identifies two types of hagiographies that organize siddha names and identities either into groups or discrete lineages. While the *Legends* falls into the *group* type, the so-called “Sham Sher manuscript” – also known as the only extant Sanskrit Buddhist siddha hagiography – represents the *lineal* type. The “Sham Sher manuscript” dates to the 11th century at the earliest since it emphasizes which emphasizes the Amanasikāra lineage of which Maitrīpa (c. 1007–1085)

Caturaśītisiddhasaṃbodhiḥṛdaya (*Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i rtogs pa snying po*, “Quintessential Anthology of the Realization of the Eight-four Siddhas,” “*Anthology*” hereafter) which parallels the *Legends* and is explicitly attributed to Abhayadattaśrī’s predecessor *Vīraprabha (dPa’-bo-’od-gsal) as the “compiler,” and (3) an extensive commentary on the *Anthology* (*Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i rtogs brjod do ha 'grel bcas*). All three works currently exist only in Tibetan translation or composition.¹⁹⁰ While the *Legends* and *Anthology* probably had Sanskrit originals which are now unfortunately lost, the commentary, despite claiming to be Indian in authorship, is most likely a Tibetan composition directly written by sMon-grub-shes-rab as he received the oral teaching from Abhayadattaśrī.

Besides the *Cycle*, there exist two Indian siddha listings received by Chinese readers through the Tibetan – and most likely also Tangut – mediums. One is in *Prayers to the Eighty-four Siddhas* (*Grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi'i gsol 'debs*, “*Prayers*” hereafter) attributed to Vajrāsana. Though no Sanskrit original is available, the work is preserved in the Tibetan bsTan-'gyur (D 3758), and also in the *DYM* in Chinese translation (*Chengjiu bashiwushi dao zhu* 成就八十五师祷祝, though the Chinese list contains one more siddha than the Tibetan one, thus making a list of eighty-five). The *Prayers* constitutes versified prayers to eighty-four/five siddhas, narrating their life

is major representative; see Tatz 1987. For several other works in the received record of siddha hagiography beyond the *Legends* and the “Sham sher manuscripts,” see Davidson 2002a: 306–307.

¹⁹⁰ Transmitted primarily as meditation themes, the works subsumed under the *Cycle* has served as the apparatus of spiritual exercise for Tibetan practitioners. Kapstein (2006: 26) mentions that “the whole collection has come down through the centuries from master to disciple in the course of an initiation into the practice of *guruyoga*, the Buddhist tantric devotional exercise focusing upon the figure of the guru;” “the recitation of the songs given in Vīraprabha’s anthology assumes an initiatory function.”

activities and spiritual accomplishments. Its possible connection with the *Cycle* is that the *Prayers*'s attributed compiler Vajrāsana precedes Abhayākaragupta in the Sahaja lineage as recorded in Bla-ma Zhang's received transmissions (*brGyud pa sna tshogs*).¹⁹¹

Another listing which enumerates forty-three siddhas (with Tilopa appearing twice) can be found in the *Upadeśa on the Spiritual Experience: the Golden Garland of the Drops* (*Nyams kyi man ngag thig le gser phreng ba*, “Golden Garland” hereafter), which is also preserved both in the bsTan-'gyur (D 2449) and the *DYM* (*Jinyingluo yaomen* 金瓔珞要門). The work is a collection of short verses compiled by Maitrīpa to document the Amanasikāra brand of Mahāmudrā teaching.¹⁹² The *Golden Garland* contains overt references to *mahāmudrā*, and provides a long list of its synonyms denoting the “ultimate.”

The whole collection reveals a window to multiple dimensions of the siddha life and spirituality: 1. individual vitae, lineage tree, and social networks for the siddha community; 2. siddhic social patterns and personalities exemplified through didactic stories and episodes; and 3. tantric contemplative paradigms couched in the allegorical metaphors and poetic imagery. The unifying theme is that Mahāmudrā is considered as the pinnacle of the path defined by yogic techniques of contemplation extracted from the *Yoganiruttara* cycle of Buddhist Tantra.

¹⁹¹ See the *brGyud sna*: 92a2–5; c.f. Yamanoto 2012: 356.

¹⁹² The *Golden Garland* is considered as an abridged version of Maitrīpa's *Mahāmudrākanakamālā* which was translated by Mar-pa into Tibetan (D 2454); c.f. Chapter One, note. 20. The *Mahāmudrākanakamālā* elaborates on the themes from Maitrīpa's *Amanasikāra* cycle, and indicates Maitrīpa's Mahāmudrā teachings – which had been valorized later around the 15th century within the bKa'-brgyud cycles – indeed reached back to early bKa'-brgyud patriarchs. For its critical edition and English translation, see Mathes 2005: 273–314, 512–542.

3.2.2.2.2. The three cluster-cum-transmissions of Mahāmudrā teaching

Out of the Buddhist siddha environment subscribing to the Yoganiruttara cycle, there emerged three major cluster-cum-transmissions of Mahāmudrā teaching which came to be received by Tibetans and integrated into systematic presentations in the bKa'-brgyud domain. The representatives of the three clusters are the Saraha-Maitrīpa circle which passed down the *dohā* and Amanasikāra cycles, Tilopa who passed the Six-Teaching praxis, and Atiśa who passed the Sahajayoga praxis of four yogas.

3.2.2.2.2.1. The *dohā* Mahāmudrā by the Saraha-Maitrīpa circle

There were ongoing Tibetan historiographical attempts to build a Mahāmudrā genealogy upon Saraha's *dohā* transmission which proceeded through Śavarīpa and Maitrīpa consecutively. Maitrīpa had received a multitude of disciples, the four senior ones being Sahajavajra, Devākaracandra, Rāmapāla and Vajrapāṇi. The *Blue Annals* sketches out a fourfold periodization for this *dohā*-Mahāmudrā transmission from India and Nepal over the Himalayas in terms of its different phases of translation into Tibetan. In chronological order, these four are the side transmission (*zur 'gyur*) by Mar-pa, the early transmission (*snga 'gyur*) by Nirūpa, the middle transmission (*bar 'gyur*) by Vajrapāṇi and Asū, and the late transmission (*phyi 'gyur*) by Nag-mo-she-dad; unfortunately, we do not have precise titles corresponding to these transmissions.¹⁹³ Among the four lines of transmission, it was probably Mar-pa's side transmission that extended into the early bKa'-brgyud curriculum as taught by sGam-po-pa and Bla-ma

¹⁹³ C.f. Chapter One, note 42 & 43. Schaeffer (2005: 60) comments that “despite the late date of the *Blue Annals*, which was completed in 1478, the work is in fact an anthology of older biographical sources, rather than strictly a late fifteenth-century work.”

Zhang.¹⁹⁴ The whole corpus authored by the line of teachers from Saraha through Maitrīpa’s main disciples – and presumably deriving in part or whole from these four periods of translation – only came to be emphasized within the bKa’-brgyud circles later during about the 15th century, probably as a response to criticisms leveled against the Mahāmudrā beyond the tantric context.¹⁹⁵

Although the rubric *mahāmudrā* was yet to rise to central importance in Saraha’s *Dohākośagīti*, the work does revolve around such motifs as *sahaja* gnosis, uninterrupted bliss, non-dual mind, and emptiness, all which came to be seen as synonymous with *mahāmudrā*.¹⁹⁶ In his *Dohākośagīti*, Saraha expresses a critical attitude towards the traditional forms of Buddhist praxis including even Tantra, and advocates an immediate realization of *sahaja* gnosis through the quintessential instruction (*upadeśa*, *man ngag*) of a qualified guru.¹⁹⁷ In another piece of work attributed to Saraha, the *Dohākośanāmahāmudropadeśa*, Saraha singles *mahāmudrā* out as independent of the

¹⁹⁴ According to the *Blue Annals*, Atiśa received instructions on *dohā* directly from Maitrīpa, and his teaching later reached Mar-pa as side transmission; see the *Deb sngon*: 987.4–13 (Roerich 2016: vol. 2, 843–844). The eighth Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje introduced a complete line of Mar-pa’s “side transmission” which continued through Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa. Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje identified this line as part of Maitrīpa’s teaching lineage, the rest being the early, middle and late transmissions of *dohā* Mahāmudrā; c.f. Chapter One, note 44. For Atiśa’s familiarity with Saraha’s *dohā* literature, see Schaeffer 2005: 61–62.

¹⁹⁵ Vajrapāṇi’s middle transmission is found to largely overlap with the three-corpus Mahāmudrā canon established in Tibet as early as the 14th century the latest. The *Blue Annals* records a list of tantric works taught by Vajrapāṇi to his Tibetan disciples during his stay in Nepal towards the late 11th century. Together with others, the list includes the “Seven Works on Siddhi” (*grub pa sde bdun*) cycle, the *Quintessence* (*snying po*) cycle which constitutes Saraha’s *Three-cycle Dohās* (*dohā skor gsum*), and works from Maitrīpa’s Amanasikāra cycle; c.f. note 169.

¹⁹⁶ See Jackson 2005: 5597; 2011: 289.

¹⁹⁷ See Mathes 2006: 207–208. Schaeffer (2005: 6) observes “a sarcastic critique of social, ritual, scholastic, and meditation practices” in Saraha’s *Dohākośagīti*. He further summarizes the work’s leitmotif to be “the immediacy of the ultimate spiritual experience in human bodily existence, the impossibility of adequately expressing this experience, and the necessity to engage in the proper meditative practice with an altruistic attitude under the guidance of one’s spiritual mentor in order to bring such an ecstatic experience to life in oneself.”

other seals in the four-*mudrā* set, and equates it with the true nature of the mind as well as the *amanasikāra* practice.¹⁹⁸ As such, *mahāmudrā* for Saraha is as much a label for the spiritual fruit as for a direct approach to realizing it.

The identity of the mythic figure Śavaripa (alias Śavareśvara) is even more difficult to pin down than his alleged predecessor Saraha. It is said that he had passed Mahāmudrā teachings and tantric instructions to Maitrīpa (alias Maitrīgupta or Advayavajra) as the latter interrupted his scholarly career in the monastic base for a retreat among the Śavara tribes. Later, Maitrīpa returned to the academic milieu on the advice of Śavaripa and started to compose a number of treatises which formed the bulk of the Amanasikāra cycle.¹⁹⁹

3.2.2.2.2. The Six-Teaching Mahāmudrā by Tilopa

The Six-Teaching (*ṣaḍdharma, chos drug*) praxis ascribed to Tilopa (988–1069) – later known as “Nāropa’s Six Teachings” (*nā ro chos drug*) in recognition of Nāropa’s (1016–1100) central role in further transmitting them to Tibet – was valorized within the bKa’-brgyud circles since the beginning of the institution as the primary experiential referent to Mahāmudrā. A normative succession celebrated by the bKa’-brgyud institution is from Vajradhāra through Tilopa, Nāropa, Mar-pa, Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa, after whom the line branches into subsectarian descents.

¹⁹⁸ See the *DM* (91.17–18): *rang gi de nyid rang gis rtogs gyur na | yengs pa’i sems kyang phyag rgya chen por ’char ||*; (92.17–18): *yid la mi byed phyag rgya chen po la | bsgom rgyu rdul tsam med pas mi sgom ste |*; c.f. Mathes 2008: 122.

¹⁹⁹ See Mathes 2006: 208. For an extensive account of Maitrīpa’s life based on the so-called “Sham sher manuscript” – the only extant Sanskrit Buddhist siddha hagiography – along with several Tibetan sources, see Tatz 1987.

The Six-Teaching praxis represents the first attempt to draw elements from the Yoganiruttara tantras into a synthesis of perfection-phase yogic techniques in use among the siddha communities. Tilopa is said to have received a range of tantric and yogic teachings from human and divine masters which he integrated to form the Six-Teaching transmission.²⁰⁰ Regarded as the ‘authentic source’ (*khungs*) of the Six-Teaching praxis, Tilopa’s *Ṣaḍdharmopadeśa* (*Chos drug gi man ngag*, “*ṢDh*” hereafter) sketches out an organic system which assigns the six teachings to four currents of yogic transmission (*bka’ babs bzhi*).²⁰¹ The six teachings as presented in the *ṢDh* are: 1. the Psychic Heat (*caṇḍālī, gtum mo*) *yoga*; 2. the Illusory Body (*māyākāya, sgyu lus*) *yoga*; 3. the Dream (*svapna, rmi lam*) *yoga*; 4. the Clear Light (*prabhāsvara, ’od gsal*) *yoga*; 5. the Intermediate State (*antarābhava, bar do*) *yoga*; and 6. the Transference (*saṃkrānti, ’pho ba*) *yoga*.

The four currents of transmission which respectively carried one or two of the six teachings and converged in the person of Tilopa are as follows:²⁰²

Cāryapa (i.e., Kṛṣṇācārya)	Psychic Heat
Nāgārjuna	Illusory Body & Clear Light
Lavapa (<i>alias</i> Kambala)	Dream

²⁰⁰ Torricelli (1993: 186) points out a widely attested Tibetan narrative tradition that “when asked the name of his master, the Bengali *mahāsiddha* Tilopa would answer: ‘I have no human masters. My *guru* is Sarvajña (Thams-cad-mkhyen)!’, which gave rise to general incomprehension and incredulity. Realizing the risks involved in this sceptical response, he thought better to link himself to four distinct lines of human transmission.”

²⁰¹ Torricelli (1993: 186, note 7) discusses the “semantic versatility” of the term *bka’ babs* and decides to opt for “transmission” as its translation in the current context.

²⁰² See the *ṢDh*; c.f. Torricelli 1993: 185–186.

The Tibetan sources which came later, nonetheless, varied considerably as to the Six-Teaching list and the lineage and content of each current. What complicated the picture was the ongoing yet inconsistent Tibetan attempts to correlate the teaching or current with a Yoganiruttara tantra as scriptural basis.²⁰³ The usual practice is to assign either the *Hevajratantra* or the *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* – or both – to the Psychic Heat *yoga*, the Ārya tradition of the *Guhyasamāja* to the Illusory Body and Clear Light *yogas*, and the *Caturpīṭha* to the Transference *yoga*.

Another seminal text on the Six-Teaching praxis is the *Karṇatantravajrapada* (*sNyan brgyud rdo rje'i tshig rkang*, “*KP*” hereafter) – or *Karṇatantravajrayogiṅī* (*sNyan brgyud rdo rje rnal 'byor ma*) – which meanwhile occupies a crucial position within the *bDe mchog snyan brgyud* (Aural transmission of Cakrasaṃvara) textual tradition of the Tibetan bKa'-brgyud collection of esoteric teachings.²⁰⁴ The colophon of the *KP* states that the text was translated into Tibetan by Mar-pa Chos-kyi-blo-gros (1012–1097) in the presence of Nāropa.²⁰⁵ Zhang Lo-tsā-ba (*alias* Phur-ba-skyabs or Grub-pa dPal-bzang-po, d. 1237) has specified in his introductory note (*thim yig*) to the *bDe mchog snyan brgyud* collection that the *Karṇatantravajrapada* – expounded by Vajradhara to Jñānaḍākīṅī – reveals the meaning of the aural transmission of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle together with Tilopa's small adamantine text (*rDo rje'i gzhung chung*) as well as his two commentarial

²⁰³ See Torricelli 1993

²⁰⁴ For the *bDe mchog snyan brgyud* collection, especially Zhang Lo-tsā-ba's introductory note to it, see Torricelli 2001.

²⁰⁵ See the *KP* (304b4): *mkhas pa nā ro paṅ chen gyi zhal snga dang | lo tsā ba mar pa chos gyi blo gros kyis bu'pa ha ri'i gnas chen du bsgyur cing gtan la phab pa'o* ||; Torricelli 1998: 411–412.

works on that.²⁰⁶ Based on this piece of information, Torricelli (1998) hypothetically ascribes the *KP* to Tilopa.²⁰⁷

The *KP* embeds the Six-Teaching praxis into a broader practical environment of ritual and yogic implementations than in the *SDh*. Before the accounts of the perfection-phase Six-Teaching praxis, the *KP* adds the parts of Cakrasaṃvara initiation (*abhiṣeka*, *dbang bskur*) rituals and generation-phase practice which were explicitly identified in the later Nāro Chos-drug literature as preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*). Moreover, the Corpse Entering (*parakāyapraveśa*, *grong 'jug*) *yoga* separates off the Transference to make a distinct practice, and the Intermediate State *yoga* is moved to the end. Between the Corpse Entering and Intermediate state *yogas* are inserted explanations of Mahāsukha (*bde ba chen po*) and Mahāmudrā. Thus, the *KP* presents the ritual and yogic teachings in ten divisions: 1. initiations and generation-phase practice; 2. Psychic Heat; 3. Illusory Body; 4. Dream; 5. Clear Light; 6. Transference; 7. Corpses Entering; 8. Mahāsukha (i.e., Karmamudrā); 9. Mahāmudrā; and 10. Intermediate State.²⁰⁸

No matter how varied later Tibetan accounts of the Six-Teaching praxis were in terms of the specific content and order, they were fairly unanimous in placing Psychic Heat at the head of the list. This is based upon the pivotal role of Psychic Heat plays in the whole perfection-phase praxes. Psychic Heat is associated with the second secret

²⁰⁶ See the *Thim yig* (1b3–4): *de dag gi don bstan pa ni | rdo rje 'chang yis ye shes mkha' 'gro ma la gsungs pa'i rdo rje tshig rkang | te lo pas mdzad pa'i rdo rje'i gzhung chung | de'i chan dang 'grel pa* |; Torricelli 2001: 882; c.f. Torricelli 1998: 385, note 2.

²⁰⁷ Torricelli (1998: 386) dates the composition of the *KP* to the 10th century, for it supposedly precedes Tilopa's *rDo rje gzhung chung* considered as a comment on the former. Moreover, the hagiographical report that "Tilopa went to the *dākiṇī*'s mansion, in Uḍḍiyāna, where he received esoteric instructions from Jñānaḍākiṇī" (*op. cit.*, note 7) further strengthens Torricelli's hypothesis.

²⁰⁸ For a synopsis of the *KP*, see Torricelli 1998: 388–389.

initiation (*guhyābhiṣeka*) which authorizes the practitioner for the self-consecration (*svādhiṣṭhāna*, *rang byin gyis brlab pa*) praxis. In applying the Psychic Heat technique, one visualizes the multitude of energy channels (*nāḍī*, *rtsa*), wheels (*cakra*, *'khor lo*), and energy wind (*vāyu*, *rlung*), with a flame emitting from the navel wheel, rising up along the central channel (*avadhūtī*, *rtsa dbu ma*) to the crown wheel, and then directing the energy wind back downwards. The *KP* makes it explicit that Psychic Heat characteristic of bliss and self-ignition (*bde drod rang 'bar*) is the foundation of the path (*lam gyi gzhung*), upon the accomplishment of which the rest perfection-phase practices will build. One remarkable sign of Psychic Heat accomplishment is that the energy winds of consciousness (*rlung sems*) enter the central channel, which induces the experience of non-conceptuality (*mi rtog pa*), bliss (*bde ba*), and luminosity (*gsal ba*).²⁰⁹

Belonging to the siddha culture subscribing to the Yoganiruttara cycle, the Six-Teaching praxis takes Mahāmudrā as its end. The *Mahāmudropadeśa* (*Phyag rgya chen po 'i man ngag*) included in the Tibetan bsTan-'gyur encapsulates Tilopa's thoughts about Mahāmudrā which connotes a natural state of the mind space-like and free from any exertions and bondage.²¹⁰ Commonly known as the “*Gaṅgamā*,” the work preserves the seminal instructions on the Mahāmudrā view and practice Tilopa passed to Nāropa on the Ganges bank. Like Saraha, Tilopa convey objections to forms of Buddhist training that involve deliberative efforts. However, the *Gaṅgamā*'s anti-exertion attitude – like all the

²⁰⁹ See the *KP* (303a2–4): *gtum mo bde drod rang 'bar lam gyi gzhung | ... dga' bzhi goms pas rtsa rlung thig le 'dres | dhū tir rlung sems tshud pas mi rtog pa | nyon mongs rang zhi bde gsal rgyun mi 'chad | ngo bo mthong nas chos sku'i ngang du gnas* |; Torricelli 1998: 395–6

²¹⁰ See the *MU* (XV; Tiso & Torricelli 1991: 214): *dper na nam mkha' gang la gang gis brten / de bzhin rang sems phyag chen rten yul med | ma bcos gnyug ma'i ngang du glod la zhog | bcings pa glod gyur grol bar the tshom med* | (Like space – who can find its position? So, too, is your own thinking activity: the Great Seal has not to be localized. Be relaxed in its unmodulated and primal essentiality! Once the bonds are released, liberation ... is beyond questioning.)

post-tantric threads and expressions – does not necessarily exclude its indebtedness to the tantric matrices, which in this case is represented by the Six-Teaching praxis system.

3.2.2.2.3. The Sahajayoga Mahāmudrā by Atiśa

The Sahajayoga Mahāmudrā defined by the Four-Yoga praxis was brought by Atiśa to Tibet, and hence was not created by sGam-po-pa as the later tradition would lead us to believe. The teaching is contained in a work titled “*lHan cig skyes sbyor gyi gdam ngag mdor bsdus snying po*” (*Condensed Instructions of the Co-emergent Union: the Quintessence*, “*Co-emergent Union*” hereafter) or “*Jo bo rjes dgon pa ba la gnang phyag chen*” (*Lord Atiśa’s Mahāmudrā Grant to dGon-pa-ba*), a brief compilation of Atiśa’s instructions on the co-emergent union (*sahajayoga*). Placed first among Atiśa’s cycle of tantric teachings, the *Co-emergent Union* includes at its end a lineage stemming from Vajradhāra, Tilopa, Nāropa, and Ḍombi Heruka.²¹¹

Identifying the *sahaja* mind as *dharmakāya* and advocating a luminosity-meditation approach to it, Atiśa outlines in the *Co-emergent Union* a set of four *yogas* that navigate one in a stepwise manner to the realization of the nature of the mind.²¹² The four *yogas* include the *yoga* of one-pointedness (*rtse gcig*), the *yoga* of proliferation-free (*spros bral*), the *yoga* of one taste (*ro gcig*), and the *yoga* of non-meditation (*sgom du med pa*).²¹³ The end of the path is the realization of *dharmakāya*, through constant

²¹¹ See the *Jo phyag* (878.16–17; Apple 2017: 31): *brgyud pa ni | rdo rje 'chang | te lo | nā ro | ḍom̄ bhi he ru ka | jo bo ...*

²¹² See Apple 2017: 23–27.

²¹³ See the *Jo phyag* (877.4–14; Apple 2017: 29–30). For the four *yogas* in later Tibetan literature, see Apple 2017: 26, note 48.

familiarization of which one aims to accomplish Mahāmudrā at the time of death when the natural luminosity (*rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal*) and the meditative luminosity (*sgom pa'i 'od gsal*) meet.²¹⁴

The attribution of the Sahajayoga Mahāmudrā to Atiśa is attested as the eighth in the list of nine teachings bKa'-gdams-pa dGe-bshes-'gar (ca. 12th century) received from Atiśa as recorded in rMog-lcog Rin-chen-brtson-'grus's (1110–1170) biography.²¹⁵ Later Tibetan accounts further confirmed the bKa'-brgyud inheritance of Atiśa's Sahajayoga Mahāmudrā.²¹⁶ In addition, the canonical basis of the Four-Yoga praxis was traced to an un-canonized tantra **Alikaliguhyācintātantra*.²¹⁷

Elsewhere, Atiśa's expositions of Mahāmudrā-related thoughts and practices show a predilection for monastic-based exegetical style, which is connected with his

²¹⁴ See the *Jo phyag* (877.25–878.5; Apple 2017: 30–31): *de ltar nyams su blangs pas 'chi ba'i dus su sa chu la thim | chu me la [sic. ma] thim | me rlung la thim | rlung rnam par shes pa la thim | rlung sems gnyis | a wa dhu tir tshud pa'i dus su | chos nyid lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes rang bzhin gyis gnas pa'i steng du song ba dang | de ltar bsgoms pa'i stobs kyis sngar 'dris kyi mi dang | 'phrad pa ltar ngo shes te | rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba dang | bsgoms pa'i 'od gsal gnyis phrad nas phyag rgya chen po'i dngos grub thob |.*

²¹⁵ See Apple 2017: 24, note 46.

²¹⁶ For instance, the eighth Karma-pa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (1507–1554) in his *gDams khrid man ngag gi rim pa 'chi med bdud rtsi'i ljon bzang* points out that the Mahāmudrā guidance through *śamatha* (*zhi gnas*) and *vipāśyanā* (*lhag mthong*) – which is in accordance with the causal vehicle of Pāramitānaya – came from Atiśa. Dwags-po bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal (1512/13–1587) also mentions that it was sGam-po-pa who had composed a clear elucidation on each of the four *yogas* of Mahāmudrā with a fine differentiation designed for present-day practitioners; see the *Phyag zla* (481.2–4; Lhalungpa 2006: 362–363): *rnal 'byor bzhi so so'i nyams myong dang rtogs pa mtho dman gyi rnam dbye zhib char phye nas | deng sang nyams len pa rnam la go bde bar mdzad pa'i bka' drin che ba ni rje sgam po pas mdzad pa yin la |.* I acquired the information from the speech of Doctor Yang Jie in the *Remembering the Master of the Classical Studies in China* conference in Wuxi (China) in December, 2017.

²¹⁷ See the *Phyag zla* (481.5–8; Lhalungpa 2006: 363): *rnal 'byor bzhi'i mtshan don rags pa tsam ni sngon nas yod par snang ste | gong du drangs pa'i gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i rgyud kyi lung de ltar snang ba dang | jo bo rjes dgon pa ba la gnang ba'i lhan cig skyes sbyor du'ang rnal 'byor bzhi bshad pa dang |.* The tantra is now found preserved in the *Zhi byed snga bar phyi gsum* collection under the title “*A li ka li gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa chu klung chen po'i rgyud.*”

institutional base of the Vikramaśīla monastery.²¹⁸ In a word, Atiśa derived his Sahajayoga Mahāmudrā of four *yogas* from Tilopa’s tradition. The emphasis was on meditating on luminosity as the *sahaja* nature of the mind. The Sahajayoga idea and Four-Yoga praxis ultimately ended up in the bKa’-brgyud curriculum and came to be understood as a paradigm for the sūtric mode of Mahāmudrā.

3.3. Concluding remarks

Up to the 11th century when the mass of yogic techniques and tantric doctrines subscribing to the Yoganiruttara cycle flooded over the Himalayas, Mahāmudrā in its original Indian context of Buddhist Tantra came to be received in a post-tantric sense as a gnostic index of ultimacy defined by the luminous nature of the mind. Grounding themselves in particular discursive and practical sources, tantric Buddhists devised and articulated a variety of approaches – tantric or non-tantric – towards the realization of Mahāmudrā. Three major threads stood out among the many traditions and lineages known under the Mahāmudrā rubric: Saraha-Maitrīpa’s *dohā* and Amanasikāra cluster, Tilopa’s Six-Teaching cluster, and Atiśa’s Sahajayoga cluster. All three came to be integrated into a systematic presentation in the bKa’-brgyud curriculum building project.

While Mahāmudrā laid a strong claim to a siddha-rooted context, its interpretation and system building gradually shifted to monastic hands, the best Indian examples of which are reflected in the cases of Maitrīpa and Atiśa. As such, Mahāmudrā was steadily

²¹⁸ Apple (2017) approaches Atiśa’s Mahāmudrā thoughts and related statements based on the *Abhisamayavibhāṅga*, the *lTa sgom chung ngu*, the *lTa sgom ’bring po*, the *lTa sgom chen mo*, the *Ratnakaraṅḍodgḥaṭamādhyaṃakopadeśa*, the *Vajrāsanavajragīti*, the *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa*, and the *lHan cig skyes sbyor gyi gdam ngag mdor bsdus snying po*. Among these works, the *lTa sgom* series reflects the best his monastic predilection.

on its way to becoming a more philosophic discourse, as well as more amenable to being situated within the standard monastic curriculum. The next chapter is devoted to the philosophical project of Buddhist Tantra as reflected in the Mahāmudrā, the central focus being geared towards an appropriation of the Buddha-nature discourse which usually evokes a microcosmic *buddha* as the gnostic agency embodied within all walks of life.

4. Chapter Three

Apratiṣṭhāna, Amanasikāra, and Buddha-nature: Grounding Mahāmudrā in the Mahāyāna philosophy and scholastic frameworks

Overview

While scholarship at times has emphasized the priority of ritual in tantric Buddhism, in its mature and systematic expression it is equally focused on a broader spectrum of both practical and doctrinal registers as organizing its entire program.²¹⁹ While it may be true that there has been a Western project to rationalize Indian Tantric religions in general by reading too much philosophy into them,²²⁰ the Buddhist attempts to articulate a philosophy for and out of Tantra has been an ongoing historical undertaking from the moment a self-consciously tantric Buddhist tradition took form, and it has only intensified over time. The ideological landscape of Buddhist Tantra, indeed, shared a fundamental concordance with that of many core Mahāyāna beliefs, ideologies, and philosophical positions, as befits the increasing recognition that the former emerged initially within monastic institutions that were deeply Mahāyāna in orientation. In

²¹⁹ I do not intend to strive here for a comprehensive discussion on the issue of how the “tantric Buddhism” – a complex body of fluid registers and realities in and of themselves historically contingent and culturally relevant – could be defined. The definitional attempt, if unable to avoid the fundamentalist fallacy, risks amalgamating “esoteric ritual theory and practice into a collective statement about Tantric Buddhism as a whole;” see Davidson 2002b: 45. The purpose for touching upon this topic, however, is to call attention to philosophy as an equally indispensable dimension of tantric Buddhism.

²²⁰ Urban (1999) argues that “it is largely through the dialectical tension between ... the Victorian horror at Tantric licentiousness, and Woodroffe’s defense and de-odorization of Tantric philosophy” that the category “Tantrism” “came to be inherited by contemporary historians of religions.” In order to “rescue the Tantric tradition from its many critics among the Orientalists and colonial administrators,” Woodroffe had “depicted the Tantras as noble, philosophical and intellectual tradition.”

addition, around the 10th century, Buddhist esoterica in tantras began to take on a life of expanded philosophical vigor, a discursive pursuit of key topics that in many cases went beyond merely embodying or internalizing common Mahāyāna thoughts and positions.²²¹

As a complex reciprocity emerged between *tāntrikas* searching for more articulate theoretical grounds for their meditative, ritual, and behavioral programs and monastics appropriating yogic ritualism into monastic life,²²² traditional Mahāyāna scholastic models and hermeneutics were adopted on all fronts to engage philosophical questions in the tantras.²²³ Adding to the traditional syncretic picture of Madhyamaka, Vijñānavāda and Pramāṇavāda, the Buddha-nature (*tathāgatagarbha*) current was increasingly

²²¹ Germano & Waldron (2006: 50–2) has described as “philosophical Vajrayāna” this tantric pursuit of “central philosophical issues in a systematic and rigorous fashion within a specifically esoteric discursive terrain” and ascribed it to the Tibetan innovation. The term “philosophical Vajrayāna” was first brought up by Matthew Kapstein (1992: 194) to denote “philosophical speculation inspired in part by tantric Buddhism, and so not entirely reducible to the philosophy of one or the other of the four normative schools recognized in later Indian Buddhist scholasticism.” As I have observed elsewhere the philosophical Vajrayāna movement extends back into certain Indian tantric circles. For instance, the Amanasikāra corpus by Maitrīpa’s (fl. 11th century) circle displays a model of “aligning tantric Mahāmudrā discourse with traditional Mahāyāna metaphysics” (Jackson 2011: 289). For the Maitrīpa corpus, see Mathes 2015. Seyfort Ruegg (1981: 104–8) also introduces the tantric background of the composition of certain Indian Madhyamaka works. More discussions about the Indian practice of blending Buddhist Tantra with Mahāyāna scholasticism will be presented below.

²²² One remarkable phenomenon concomitant to this process was the tendency among Mahāyāna teachers to lay dual claims to the Vajrayānist and scholarly identities. For a sketch of the Vajrayānist appropriation of the Madhyamaka philosophy, see Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 104–8. Worthy of note is the tendency of name appropriation Seyfort Ruegg (1981: 105–6) has observed inside the Vajrayāna Buddhist circles, that is, to project the identities of tantric masters back to those of earlier Mādhyamika teachers.

²²³ This further inspired within the Mahāyāna milieu everlasting discussions about the interrelations between sūtra and tantra. In terms of the Tibetan attitude towards the sūtra-tantra distinction, Germano & Waldron (2006: 51–2) has observed “a general polarization into two broad trajectories: one which tended to keep these two discourse realms separate by treating tantra as innovative in ‘practice’ but consonant with traditional exoteric ‘view’; and one which tended to see these discourses as interpenetrating, and understood tantra to be profoundly philosophical and even superior to traditional exoteric intellectual discourses.” A religio-social parallel to this model is the distinction between the gSar-ma (modernist) and rNying-ma (traditionalist) persuasions; see Almogi 2009: 76–7, note 103.

recognized as a central discursive thread that was particularly useful to articulate the newly flourishing tantric gnoseology.²²⁴

It was in this context that tantric theorists read Mahāyāna sūtric philosophy and exoteric scholasticism into Mahāmudrā, with a particular interest in exploring a shared experiential ground of non-conceptual realization of the mind’s nature. Our mid-12th century Tangut *Keypoints-Notes* cluster is an excellent example of how Mahāmudrā was accorded a traditional Mahāyāna philosophical ground, which, in turn, is largely credited to the 11th-century Indian precedent represented by Maitrīpa’s circle. In this chapter, I take Maitrīpa’s Amanasikāra corpus as a point of departure to unpack the sūtric philosophical threads embedded in Mahāmudrā and trace their roots in the Mahāyāna scholastic milieu.

4.1. Maitrīpa and his disciples’ efforts: A philosophy for and of Mahāmudrā

The doctrinal repertoire of the Saraha-Maitrīpa circle represented by the Quintessence and Amanasikāra cycles (*snying po skor drug & yid la mi byed pa’i chos skor*) in general treats *mahāmudrā* as a label as much for the realization of reality – or the true nature of the mind – as for the *amanasikāra* approach to that realization. In specific, the practice and goal of *mahāmudrā* constitute a realization of non-dual experience as empty – which is induced by an introduction into the nature of one’s own mind and aided

²²⁴ Davidson (1997) discusses the Vajrayānist appropriation of *pramāṇa* language for the purpose of establishing derivative authority and attributes it to the continued Indian Buddhist practice of building “embodied authority” in personality, this time, however, in tantric masters (34–5). Abhayākaragupta (d. c. 1125) – in his treatment of Mahāyāna gnoseology and soteriology in reference with the Prajñāpāramitā doctrine and basic Madhyamaka and Yogācāra texts – has given an explanation of the Tathāgatagarbha theory in connection with the single vehicle (*ekayāna*); see Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 114–5.

by a qualified teacher's quintessential instruction (*upadeśa*). An idea that had taken on its own life in Buddhist tantric and siddha discourses, *Mahāmudrā* was further situated by Maitrīpa and his disciples in the doctrinal context of the sūtras and their exoteric teachings.

4.1.1. Tantric roots and non-tantric alternatives

Listed as the first work in the Quintessence cycle, and presented as the earliest in composition, the *Dohākośagīti* attributed to Saraha does not treat *mahāmudrā* as a central topic of analysis. However, the work does emphasize (probably for the first time among the materials available to us) an unconventional technique – which is explicitly designated as being beyond both sūtric and tantric practices – for experiencing the co-emergent gnosis (*sahajajñāna*) with the help of a qualified teacher's quintessential instruction (*upadeśa*).²²⁵ This foreshadows what is presented as a standard *mahāmudrā* approach in supposedly later works in the Quintessence and *Amanasikāra* cycles. Elsewhere, two other less celebrated works attributed to Saraha – the *Vajragīti* and the *Dohākośanāmahāmudropadeśa* (*DMU*) – in fact deal with *mahāmudrā*. While *Vajragīti* assigns various synonyms denoting ultimacy – such as unchangeable bliss and *sahaja* – to *mahāmudrā*,²²⁶ the *DMU* equates *mahāmudrā* with the true nature of the mind as well as with the *amanasikāra* approach to it.²²⁷

²²⁵ See Schaeffer 2000: 7; Mathes 2006: 207–208.

²²⁶ See Braitstein 2004: 187–229 (v. 7, 14, 20, 33, etc.).

²²⁷ See the *DMU* (91.16–18): *ma yengs sems kyis rang gis rang la ltos || rang gi de nyid rang gis rtogs gyur na || yengs pa'i sems kyang phyag rgya chen por 'char*; (92.17–18): *yid la mi byed*

It is as yet uncertain if a tantric context implicitly grounded Saraha's description and prescription of *mahāmudrā* or its equivalent in these texts. Nevertheless, as is evident in the works other than Saraha's from the Quintessence and Amanasikāra cycles, the Mahāmudrā practice and attainment were brought (back) to tantric grounds, whether or not the texts in question also proposed an alternative non-tantric approach. For example, the *Caturmudrānvaya* (*The Succession of the Four Seals*) which belongs to the Quintessence cycle²²⁸ presents *mahāmudrā* in the tantric context of the four *mudrās*. Following in line with the *Caturmudrānvaya* are Maitrīpa's *Sekanirdeśa* (*A Presentation of Initiation*) and his disciple Rāmapāla's *pañjikā* (explanation of difficult points) commentary on it, both works contained in the Amanasikāra cycle.²²⁹

The *Caturmudrānvaya* reworks the four-*mudrā* set originally presented in the Yogatantra context into a new scheme to account for the ground, path, and fruit of the tantric praxis defined by the Yoganiruttara cycle of Buddhist Tantra. In the reformulated system, each of the *karma-*, *dharmā-*, *mahā-*, and *samaya-mudrās* is assigned a different signification than in the *STTS*:²³⁰ *karmamudrā* is an actual consort with whom you sexually join to generate co-emergent joy (*sahajānanda*), which in turn helps one identify the *mahāmudrā* goal of co-emergence (*sahaja*); *dharmamudrā*, synonymous with *dharmadhātu* or the like, constitutes the ultimate to be cultivated on the path; *mahāmudrā*

phyag rgya chen po la / bsgom rgyu rdul tsam med pas mi sgom ste /; c.f. Mathes 2008: 122, note 159&160.

²²⁸ The authorship of the *Caturmudrānvaya* remained a controversial issue. The work is contained in the composite *Advayavajrasaṃgraha* attributed to Maitrīpa, while Rāmapāla attributed the work to the tantric Nāgārjuna in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*. However, Rāmapāla's attribution was contested by Vibhūticandra. See Mathes 2008: 90–91.

²²⁹ See Mathes 2008.

²³⁰ For the *Caturmudrānvaya*'s detailed explications of the four *mudrās* respectively as well as Kāroṇa's commentary on them, see Mathes 2008: 97–121.

stands for the fruit, i.e., the realization of the true nature of the mind; *samayamudrā* refers to the physical manifestation of awakened beings, which often leads to its association with the *deity yoga* praxis of visualizing deities, *maṇḍalas* and the like.

Though the contrived *karmamudrā*-based practices were seen as being capable of generating co-emergent joy, they are not considered in the *Caturmudrānvaya* as a sufficient base for the uncontrived *mahāmudrā* attainment. The co-emergent joy induced by *karmamudrā* is only a reflection of the real co-emergent or the co-emergent gnosis, namely *mahāmudrā*.²³¹ Rather, it must be the uncontrived *dharmamudrā* that acts as the cause of *mahāmudrā*.²³² Under this circumstance, the true *mahāmudrā* attainment

²³¹ See the *CMA* (Mathes 2015: 120–121; 392): All this co-emergent is called co-emergent because it is an imitation of the [real] co-emergent. The co-emergent is the wisdom based on a *prajñā* because it makes one realize the image of the co-emergent, i.e., a wisdom which is similar to the co-emergent. Therefore, there is no arising of the [real] co-emergent in (Tib. “from”) the wisdom based on a *prajñā*. Because just as much as the nature of all phenomena which is the so-called co-emergent is the defining characteristic of the uncontrived, a fruit similar [to the real co-emergent] is produced after having relied on a *karmamudrā* (*sahajaṃ tat sarvaṃ sahajacchāyānukāritvāt sahajam ity abhidhīyate | sahajacchāyā sahasadṛśaṃ jñānaṃ pratipādayatīti sahajam prajñājñānam | ata eva prajñājñāne sahasasyotpattir nāsti | yasmāt sahajam nāma svarūpaṃ sarvadharmāṇām akṛtrimasvalakṣaṇam iti yāvat | tasmāt karmamudrāṃ prāpya niṣyandaphalam utpadyate |; lhan cig skyes pa ni de thams cad du lhan cig skyes pa'i grib ma'i rjes su byed pa'i phyir | lhan cig skyes pa zhes brjod do | lhan cig skyes pa'i grib ma ni lhan cig skyes pa dang 'dra ba'i ye shes khong du chud par byed pas shes rab ye shes ni lhan cig skyes pa'o || de'i phyir shes rab ye shes las lhan cig skyes pa skyes pa med do || gang gi phyir lhan cig skyes pa zhes bya ba'i rang bzhin ni chos thams cad kyi ma bcos pa'i rang gi mtshan nyid ces bya ba'i bar du'o || de'i phyir las kyi phyag rgya la brten nas rgyu mthun pa'i 'bras bu skyed par byed do |).*

²³² See the *CMA* (Mathes 2015: 121; 393): [Only] from a cause of a specific kind does a fruit of this same specific kind arise, and not from another kind. Just as the sprout of a *śālī*[-tree] and not a *kodrava*[-plant] arises from a *śālī*-seed, the uncontrived co-emergent arise from the presence of the uncontrived *dharmamudrā*. Therefore, it is only the *dharmamudrā* that is the cause of *mahāmudrā* (*svajātīyāt kāraṇāt svajātīyasyaiva kāryasyotpattir bhavati na tu vijātīyāt | yathā śālībījāt śālyānkurasotyotpattir bhavati na tu kodravasya | tathā dharmamudrāyā akṛtrimāyāḥ sakāśād akṛtimaṃ sahajam utpadyate | tasmād dharmamudraiva kāraṇam abhede bhedopacāreṇa mahāmudrāyāḥ; rigs mthun pa'i rgyu las rigs mthun pa'i 'bras bu skye bar 'gyur gyi | rigs mi mthun pa las ni ma yin no || ji ltar sā lu'i sa bon las sā lu'i myu gu skye bar 'gyur gyi | ko dra las ni ma yin no || de bzhin du chos kyi phyag rgya ma bcos pa'i rang bzhin las ma bcos pa'i lhan cig skyes pa'i rang bzhin skye'o || de'i phyir chos kyi phyag rgya nyid la mi phyed par spyad pa nyid na | 'bras bu phyag rgya chen po 'byung bar 'gyur ro ||).*

depends on the teacher's *upadeśa* which helps one to navigate to the recognition of the emptiness of the co-emergent joy experienced through *karmamudrā*.²³³

However, this leads to the question of whether *karmamudrā* is necessary or optional attaining *mahāmudrā* realization. While Devākaracandra – one of Maitrīpa's four senior disciples – in his *Prajñājñānaprakāśa* (from the Quintessence cycle) suggests that the *mahāmudrā* fruit is based on a preliminary wisdom (i.e., that which is induced by the *sahajānanda*) attained with the help of a consort (*prajñā* in Devākaracandra's term),²³⁴ his fellow Sahajavajra – another senior disciple of Maitrīpa's – counters this point in the *Tattvadaśakaṭikā* (from the Amanasikāra cycle) by suggesting the possibility of an alternative approach to *mahāmudrā* independent of the four-*mudrā* system.²³⁵ For Maitrīpa himself, *karmamudrā* seems to be optional for since he distinguished different approaches for practitioner of varying capacities: while those with inferior and middling faculties cultivate either with the aid of *karma-* and *samaya-mudrās* (i.e., sexual and deity *yogas*) or with the aid of *jñānamudrā* (i.e., a visualized consort), those with superior

²³³ See the *CMA* (Mathes 2015: 123; 397–398): This is realized through the one-pointed meditation on everything as having the nature of the co-emergent, and through the pith-instructions of a genuine guru (*saivādhigatā sakalapadārthasahajasvabhāvaikacittavṛtteḥ sadgurūpadeśataśca |; de nyid la don thams cad lhan cig skyes pa'i bdag nyid du sems rtse gcig tu 'jug pa dang bla ma dam pa'i man ngag gis rtogs par 'gyur ro ||*). Rāmapāla makes a similar comment on the necessity of the blessing power of a qualified teacher in making manifest *mahāmudrā* which is characteristic of all excellent qualities; see Mathes 2008: 122. Meanwhile, Vajrapāṇi considers in his *Guruparamparākrama* (which was later added into the *Mahāmudrā* canon in the *Phyag chen rgya gzhung*, thus not included in the initial three-cycle corpus) the three impure joys (other than the *sahaja* joy) as unnecessary when the fruit *mahāmudrā* is taken as the path; the key factor is the teacher's blessings; see Mathes 2016: 326.

²³⁴ Following the suite of the *Caturmudrānvaya*, Devākaracandra admits that the *sahaja* joy brought about by *karmamudrā* is only a reflection of the real *sahaja*. However, he seems steadfast in the necessity of the sexual procedure associated with *karmamudrā*; see Mathes 2011: 111–112.

²³⁵ In his commentary on the *Tattvadaśaka* (v. 8), Sahajavajra distinguishes a third path of directly realizing *mahāmudrā* on the basis of the teacher's *upadeśa*, which is beyond both the *pāramitā* and *mantra* modes; see Mathes 2006: 220–221.

faculties directly realize the reality, i.e., *mahāmudrā*, while dispensing with such consort-based practices.²³⁶ Kāropa – another disciple of Maitrīpa – mentions in his commentary on the *Caturmudrānvaya* that “those who cannot comprehend such a *dharmamudrā* must rely on a *karmamudrā*.”²³⁷ In a word, it had been generally held in Maitrīpa’s circle that *karmamudrā*, though helpful under certain circumstances, is not a prerequisite for attaining *mahāmudrā* defined by the *sahaja* experience.

4.1.2. A sūtric justification of the path beyond the tantric context

The presentation of *mahāmudrā* as a spiritual attainment resulting either from a consort-based tantric approach or a non-tantric approach based upon realizing the nature of the mind was accompanied by hermeneutical attempts to link the latter to passages in earlier and contemporary sūtric scriptures and exoteric doctrines that alluded to direct soteriological access to luminous emptiness.

The *Caturmudrānvaya* inserts two quotations from the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra* on *amanasikāra* and *apratiṣṭhāna* into the definition of *mahāmudrā*.²³⁸

²³⁶ See the *VT* (v. 7, 8 & 11); c.f. Mathes 2016: 317.

²³⁷ See Mathes 2008: 94.

²³⁸ See the *CMA* (Mathes 2015: 124; 398–399):

We have [in the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra*?]:

The mental factors of *amanasikāra* are virtuous.

Those of *manasikāra* are not virtuous.

In the [same] text (i.e., the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra*), it has been said:

Homage to You, who is without imagined thoughts,

Whose intellect is not based [on anything], who is without recollection,

Whose realization is non-conceptual,

Moreover, we have [in the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra*?]:

The mental factors of *amanasikāra* are virtuous.

Those of *manasikāra* are not virtuous.

In the [same] text (i.e., the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra*), it has been said:

Homage to You, who is without imagined thoughts,

Whose intellect is not based [on anything], who is without recollection,

Whose realization is non-conceptual,

And who is without any cognitive object.

Maitrīpa fully exploits this sūtric connection in the *mahāmudrā* section of his *Sekanirdeśa*, a work based on the *Caturmudrānvaya*. He devotes an entire eight verses (v. 29–36) to a detailed exposition of Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka.²³⁹ Rāmapāla’s commentary on the same *mahāmudrā* section in Maitrīpa’s work contains quotations from a variety of other sūtras and exoteric treatises, including the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (or the *Pratītyasamutpādahṛdayakārikā* where the same quoted passage occurs), the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, the *Lokātītastava*, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, and the

And who is without any cognitive object.

(*amanasikārā dharmāḥ kuśalā manasikāra dharmā akuśalāḥ | pravacane ca | avikalpitasamkalpa apratiṣṭhānamānasa | asmṛty amanasikāra nirālamba namo ’stu te ||; yid la mi byed pa’i chos ni dge ba’o | yid la byed pa’i chos ni mi dge ba’o | zhes gsungs pa dang | gsung rab las kyang | kun tu rtog pa ma brtags pa | rab tu mi gnas pa yi yid | dran pa med cing yid byed med | dmigs pa med la phyag ’tshal ’dud |*).

Mathes (2016: 322–323, note 52) attributes these two consecutive quotations in the *Caturmudrānvaya* to the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra*. However he himself admits that the first quotation cannot be located in the version of the sūtra available to us, but has appeared in Rāmapāla’s *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* and Maitrīpa’s *Amanasikārādhara* as well. For the equivalent of the second quotation in the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra*, see the *JĀA*: 146, II.1–2.

²³⁹ See the *SN* (Mathes 2015: 107–109; 386–388).

Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī.²⁴⁰ Rāmapāla quotes extensively from the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* in his commentary on the *Sekanirdeśa* (v. 36) to account for the *mahāmudrā* practice of becoming mentally disengaged (i.e., *amanasikāra*) in terms of abandoning all marks (*lakṣaṇa*) of the remedy, reality, and the fruit.²⁴¹ Furthermore, Rāmapāla equates this *mahāmudrā* doctrine of *apratiṣṭhāna* and *amanasikāra* with the perfection of insight (*prajñāpāramitā*), the peak of the six perfections (*pāramitā*) in standard Mahāyāna thought.²⁴²

Maitrīpa’s *Tattvadaśaka* and his disciple Sahajavajra’s commentary on it deal specifically with the Mahāmudrā beyond the tantric context as well as with its justification. Accounting for reality or suchness (*tathatā*) along both apophatic and cataphatic lines, just like found in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (v. 1),²⁴³ Maitrīpa advocates in

²⁴⁰ Mathes (2016: 325–328) identifies these sources from which Rāmapāla quotes in his commentary on the *Sekanirdeśa* (v. 29–36).

²⁴¹ See Mathes 2016: 327–331. For the quoted passages in the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*, see the *NPDh* (Tam at el. 2007: 124–135).

²⁴² See Mathes 2016: 331–333. This *mahāmudrā-prajñāpāramitā* correlation is attested in Jñānakīrti’s *Tattvāvatāra*, a work known to Maitrīpa’s circle for Sahajavajra quotes it in his commentary on the *Tattvadaśaka* (v. 8).

²⁴³ Maitrīpa starts the *Tattvadaśaka* by defining suchness along the classical Madhyamaka line of positing neither existence nor non-existence, and equating the stainless suchness with awakening; see the *TD* (Mathes 2015: 211; 485):

Homage to you, suchness,
Which has no association with existence and non-existence,
Because, [when] stainless, this very [suchness]
Has the form of enlightenment in virtue of realization. (TD 1)

(*sadasadyogahīnāyai tathatāyai namo namaḥ | anāvilā yataḥ saiva bodhato bodhirūpiṇī ||*;
yod dang med pa 'i sbyor bas kyang | spangs pa gang zhig dri med pa | byang chub rang
bzhin rtogs pa gang | de bzhin nyid der phyag 'tshal 'dud |).

Mathes (2016: 211, note 56) speculates on the influence of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* in this verse, locating the mention of “stainless suchness” as a result the basis being transformed in the *RGVV* commentary on the *RGV* (I. 25).

his *Tattvadaśaka* for an immediate “meditative approach to reality as it is” (*yathābhūtasamādhi*), through which phenomena are experienced as being luminous (v. 5).²⁴⁴ Maitrīpa further grounds the philosophy of this approach in an *upadeśa*-adorned supreme Madhyamaka beyond both the Vijñāptimātrin discussion of *sākāra* and *nirākāra* and the middling Madhyamaka (v. 2).²⁴⁵ However, a tantric background is hinted in the mention of the self-consecration (*svādhiṣṭhāna*) attainment which grounds the practitioner’s post-meditative conducts (v. 9).²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ See the *TD* (Mathes 2015: 212; 486):

Thus phenomena are [all] of one taste,
Unobstructed, and without an abode.
They are all [realized as] luminous
Through the *samādhi* of realizing true reality as it is. (TD 5)

(*evaṃ ekarasā dharmā nirāsaṅgā nirāspadāḥ | prabhāsvarā hyamī sarve
yathābhūtasamādhinā ||; de ltar chos rnams ro gcig ste | thogs pa med cing gnas med par /
ji lta ba yi ting 'dzin gyis | 'di dag thams cad 'od gsal te |*).

²⁴⁵ See the *TD* (Mathes 2015: 211; 485):

Somebody who wishes to know suchness does not [find it]
In [the Yogācāra tenets of] Sākāra[vāda] or Nirākāra[vāda];
Even the middle [path] (i.e., Madhyamaka) which is not adorned
With the words of a guru, is only middling. (TD 2)

(*na sākāranirākāre tathatāṃ jñātum icchataḥ | madhyamā madhyamā caiva
guruvāganalaṃkṛtā ||; de bzhin nyid ni shes 'dod pas | rnam bcas ma yin rnam med min /
bla ma 'i ngag gis ma brgyan pa 'i | dbu ma 'ang 'bring po tsam nyid do |*).

²⁴⁶ See the *TD* (Mathes 2015: 212; 487):

[The yogin] who has left the [eight] worldly *dharmas* behind
And adopted yogic conduct [that appears to be] crazy
Does everything without [any need for] a reference point,
Being adorned with self-empowerment. (TD 9)

(*lokadharmavyatīto 'sau unmattavratam āśritaḥ | sarvaṃ karoty anālambaḥ
svādhiṣṭhānavibhūṣitaḥ ||; 'jig rten chos las rnam ldog 'dis | smyon pa 'i spyod pa la brten
nas | bdag byin brlabs pas rnam brgyan nas | dmigs pa med par thams cad byed |*).

Sahajavajra sees in the ten *Tattvadaśaka* verses a summary of the “*pāramitā-upadeśa*” (*pha rol tu phyin pa ’i man ngag*) which accords with the secret *mantra*,²⁴⁷ and refers to the *upadeśa* of this kind and the revealed reality as *mahāmudrā*.²⁴⁸ In line with Maitrīpa, Sahajavajra regards this *upadeśa* as a salient feature of the advanced teaching – be it *mahāmudrā* or the supreme Madhyamaka – and as associated with a direct and non-analytical experience of suchness or reality (i.e., the *yathābhūtasamādhi* contemplation of reality as it is).²⁴⁹ In his commentary on the *Tattvadaśaka* (v. 2), Sahajavajra mentions that in Maitrīpa the “middling Madhyamaka which lacks the adornment of the teacher’s *upadeśa*” only engages analytical reasoning.²⁵⁰ In commenting on the *Tattvadaśaka* (v. 6), he further quotes Kamalaśīla’s (c. 740–795) *Bhāvanākrama* to contrast it to the non-analytical nature of *yathābhūtasamādhi* taught by Maitrīpa, for Kamalaśīla is considered to emphasize the role of analysis throughout the entire soteriological path.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ See the *TDT* (1.7–8): ... *gsang sngags kyi tshul dang rjes su mthun pa dang | pha rol tu phyin pa dag gi man ngag mdor bsodus pa byed par ’dod pas* |; c.f. Mathes 2006: 212.

²⁴⁸ See the *TDT* (24.19–20): *’dir yang phyag rgya chen po zhes bya ba ni phyag rgya chen po ’i de kho na nyid kyi man ngag ste | dngos po ’i de kho na nyid yongs su shes pa ’o* |; c.f. Mathes 2006: 219.

²⁴⁹ See Mathes 2006: 216. Sahajavajra also maintains that the knowledge about suchness grant by the teacher’s *upadeśa* is characteristic of the ultimate *bodhicitta*, the indivisibility of *śūnyatā* and *karuṇā*; see the *TDT* (23.8–10): *de ni ’jug pa ’i sems kyi gnas zung du ’jug pa de bzhin nyid kyi bdag nyid bla ma dam pa ’i man ngag gis rig pa de nyid stong pa nyid dang snying rje dbyer med pa | don dam pa byang chub kyi sems kyi mtshan nyid do* ||.

²⁵⁰ See the *TDT* (6.1–4): *bla ma ’i ngag gis ma brgyan pa ’i || dbu ma ’ang ’bring po tsam nyid do || zhes pas gzhan dag tu ni dngos po gsum po ’di nyid bstan to || ’dir dbu ma la ni tshad ma dang gzhal bya ’jug pa ma yin te | rang dang gzhan las zhes bya ba la sogs pa ’i bshad pa rnam par dpyad pa mi bzod pa ’i phyir ro snyam du sems so* ||.

²⁵¹ According to Sahajavajra, the cognitive status approached by Kamalaśīla’s method is not pure, for it results from analysis, whereas the *Tattvadaśaka* advocates a direct approach to the non-analytical mind (*dpyad pa med pa ’i sems*); see the *TDT* (22.16–20): *de ltar de nyid ’jug pa ’i sems pha rol tu phyin pa ’i tshul gyis rab tu dbye ba rnams ni ka ma la shī la la sogs pas bsodus pa dang rgyas pa la sogs pa ’i sgo nas bstan te | ... de ltar bur ’jug pa ’i sems ni ’dir dgos pa ma yin te | ’dir de dpyad par bya ba yongs su ma dag pa ’i phyir ro | ’dir yang dpyad pa med pa ’i sems kyi mngon du bsgom par bya ba nyid do* ||; c.f. Mathes 2006: 217, note 78.

In commenting on the *Tattvadaśaka* verse “the vain adherence to a state free from duality is taken likewise to be luminous” (v. 7),²⁵² Sahajavajra evokes the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* notion that even the marks (*lakṣaṇa*) regarding the remedy are to be abandoned – that is, if the “meditative approach to reality as it is” (*yathābhūtasamādhi*) is still accompanied by such *lakṣaṇas* stemming from the conceptualization of the remedy (i.e., adherence to non-duality), the practitioner should eradicate them by means of the *amanasikāra* approach. For Sahajavajra, the *TD 7* is Maitrīpa’s objection to such an idea: nothing is really abandoned, but everything – even the misguided adherence to non-duality – is ascertained in terms of what it actually is and thus experienced as naturally luminous.²⁵³ This, obviously, is ontologically presupposed by the notion that both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* exist simultaneously.

A contemporary work outside the three-cycle Mahāmudrā corpus, Jñānakīrti’s *Tattvātāra* exhibits a stronger sūtric tone of *mahāmudrā*. Three approaches to reality are laid out: Śrāvakayāna, Pāramitāyāna, and Mantrayāna. Interestingly enough, Jñānakīrti treats *mahāmudrā* as synonymous with “the great mother Prajñāpāramitā,” and no tantric initiation or skillful means such as sexual bliss are elicited in his *mahāmudrā* articulations. Furthermore, he even reads *mahāmudrā* back into the classical Mahāyāna meditation scheme initiated by the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, and equates *mahāmudrā* with

²⁵² See the *TD* (Mathes 2015: 212; 487): *dvayahīnābhīmānaśca tathaiva hi prabhāsvaraḥ* ||; *gnyis dang bral bar rlom pa yang | de ltar ’od gsal ba nyid do |*.

²⁵³ See the *TDT* (24.15–19): *’di ni ’dir dgos pa yin te | de yongs su shes pas de kho na nyid de | de kho na nyid rtogs par bya ba ’i phyir dpyod pa gsum po rnam par spang bar bya ba bstan pa yin te | mtha’ bzhi yongs su spangs pa bzhin no || gnyen po ’i phyogs la mi gnas shing || de nyid la yang mi chags pas || gang gi ’ang ’bras bu mi ’dod pas || de ’i phyir phyag rgya chen por shes || zhes bya ba ’i tshig gis so ||*; c.f. Mathes 2006: 219, note 85.

“Mahāyāna” in verse X. 257, the controversial issues around which will be elaborated on later in the chapter.²⁵⁴

4.1.3. Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka and Amanasikāra

Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka or Amanasikāra was the favored exoteric tenet cited as being in line with the Mantranaya (i.e., the causal vehicle) among Maitrīpa and his disciples. “Not to ground in all phenomena,” *apraṭiṣṭhāna* means that one does not reify phenomena in any conceivable way. The term *apraṭiṣṭhāna* (non-abiding) was attested early on in such Prajñāpāramitā text as the *Saptaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā*, in which it was presented as the “perfection of insight” (*prajñāpāramitā*) meditation.²⁵⁵ As for *amanasikāra*, it literally means “not to become mentally engaged.” The term came to be used in Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Jñānālokālamkāra* and the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* as the method by which *bodhisattvas* abandon all misguided projections onto reality by not becoming mentally engaged with them.²⁵⁶ In the context of Maitrīpa’s circle, it not only reveals a negation of dualistic conceptualization, but also accounts for a direct and non-analytical approach to the luminous nature of reality.

In the *Sekanirdeśa*, Maitrīpa applies the *apraṭiṣṭhāna* notion of “not to abide in anything” to the tantric description of *mahāmudrā* as signifying the stainless self-awareness (*rang rig*) associated with *sahajānanda* and the moment of freedom from

²⁵⁴ See Mathes 2006: 223–224.

²⁵⁵ See Mathes 2016: 332–333.

²⁵⁶ See Mathes 2009: 5–6.

marks (*vilakṣaṇa-kṣaṇa*).²⁵⁷ In his *pañjikā* commentary on the *Sekanirdeśa*, Rāmapāla glosses *apratīṣṭhāna* as “not to reify” and “not to become mentally engaged” (i.e., *amanasikāra*), and further quotes the same two *Jñānālokālaṃkāra* passages used by the *Caturmudrānvaya* to justify the connection between *apratīṣṭhāna* and the *mahāmudrā* practice of *amanasikāra*.²⁵⁸

4.1.3.1. Apratīṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka

Maitrīpa puts forth a doctrinal hierarchy of three vehicles and four tenets in his *Tattvaratnāvalī*. The three vehicles include the Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekayāna, and Mahāyāna, and the four tenets include Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Yogācāra, and Madhyamaka. The Mahāyāna is further divided into two modes (*naya*), the *pāramitā* and the *mantra*. While the *pāramitā* mode is pursued along the lines of Sautrāntika, Yogācāra, and Madhyamaka, the *mantra* mode is in line with Yogācāra and Madhyamaka.

²⁵⁷ See the *SN* (Mathes 2015: 107; 386):

Not to abide in anything

Is known as *mahāmudrā*.

As self-awareness (i.e., *mahāmudrā*) is stainless,

[The moments of enjoying] manifold [appearances] and so forth do not arise. (SN 29)

(*sarvasminnn apratīṣṭhānaṃ mahāmudreti kīrtiyate | vimalatvāt svasaṃvitter vicitrāder na sambhavaḥ ||; kun la rab tu mi gnas pa | phyag rgya che zhes grags pa yin | dri ma med phyir rang rig phyir | rnam pa sna tshogs sogs 'byung min |*).

Following the suite of the *Caturmudrānvaya*, the *Sekanirdeśa* presents tantric initiation on the basis of the *Hevajra* four-moment (i.e., the moment of the manifold, maturation, freedom from *lakṣaṇas*, and relaxation) and four-joy (i.e., *ānanda*, *paramānanda*, *sahajānanda*, and *viramānanda*) schemes. Only the third moment of freedom from *lakṣaṇas* and the corresponding *sahajānanda* are considered to be pure. Thus *mahāmudrā* associated with both the third moment and *sahajānanda* is independent of the impurities of the other three joys. See Mathes 2007: 553–554.

²⁵⁸ See Mathes 2007: 555.

Furthermore, Yogācāra is subdivided into Sākāravāda and Nirākāravāda, and the Madhyamaka into the Māyopamādvayavāda and Apratiṣṭhānavāda branches.²⁵⁹ By no means homogeneous in the Indian understanding,²⁶⁰ Māyopamādvaya and Apratiṣṭhāna could roughly be distinguished in that while the former posits phenomena as illusion-like in nature, the latter refutes such attempts and takes no positions regarding the ultimate at all since all phenomena are considered as substratum-less.²⁶¹ As such, Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka represents the highest tenet in Maitrīpa’s philosophical system, and meanwhile is considered to accord with the ultimate goal of the *mantra* mode by Vajrapāṇi in his commentary on the *Tattvaratnāvalī*.²⁶²

Maitrīpa summarizes the Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka tenets in six verses in the *Tattvaratnāvalī*.²⁶³ He evokes the Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka notion of reality by refuting the four ontological possibilities through the classical Madhyamaka tetralemma formula,²⁶⁴ and then describing the intellect which knows this reality as non-conceptual,

²⁵⁹ See the *TRĀ*.

²⁶⁰ For a collection of Indian and Tibetan sources which deal with the Māyopamavāda-Apratiṣṭhānavāda divide, see Amolgi 2010.

²⁶¹ See Amolgi 2010: 135.

²⁶² Vajrapāṇi posits a twofold scheme of causal and resultant vehicles, both navigating one to the single one reality in a gradualist way; see Mathes 2007: 549.

²⁶³ See the *TRĀ*: v. 28–33.

²⁶⁴ See the *TRĀ* (Mathes 2015: 71; 360):

The manifold [world] is not taken to be eternal
 Or said to be entirely annihilate [either];
 Nor is it a combination of both eternal and annihilate,
 Nor can it be that neither is the case. (TRĀ 28)

(*na mataṃ śāśvataṃ viśvaṃ na cocchedi samīhitam | śāśvatocchedinor yugmaṃ
 nānubhayaṃ vinobhayaṃ ||; sna tshogs rtag ma yin te | chad pa yang ni khas mi len | rtag
 dang chad pa gnyis ka dang | gnyis ka min pa 'ang ma yin no |*).

spontaneous (*anābhoga*), and inconceivable (*acintya*).²⁶⁵ The key tenet of Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka is that when free from all the reifications (*āropa*), reality appears on its own.²⁶⁶ In other words, only the inconceivable intellect defined by *apraṭiṣṭhā* – rather than a discursive and analytical mind – is able to approach non-reified reality. In this sense, both the Vijñānavādin assertion of the non-dual mind and the Māyopamādvayavādin assertion of the illusion-like nature of reality reflect different degrees of reification, and thus are considered inferior to Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka.

²⁶⁵ See the *TRĀ* (Mathes 2015: 71; 360).

The wise know the true reality of things
 As the non-abiding in anything.
 Now, this is not just conceptual [analysis], for a [conceptualizing] mind
 Does not now the nature of mind. (TRĀ 29)

(*sarvasminn apratiṣṭhānaṃ vastutattvaṃ vidur budhāḥ | athaiṣā kalpanā naiva yac cid veti na cittatām ||; 'dir ni thams cad mi gnas par | dngos po 'i de nyid mkhas pas rig | des na | 'di lta bu 'i rnam rtog gis | sems ni sems kyis rig ma yin |*).

Also see the *TRĀ* (Mathes 2015: 72; 361):

This effortless wisdom
 Is called inconceivable;
 Something ‘inconceivable’ that one has [been able to] conceive
 Cannot truly be inconceivable. (TRĀ 31).

(*anābhogaṃ hi yaj jñānaṃ tac cācintyaṃ pracakṣyate | saṃcintya yad acintyaṃ vai tad acintyaṃ bhaven na hi ||; shes pa gang zhig lhun grub pa | de la bsam mi khyab ces brjod | bsam bzhin du ni mi sems pa | de la bsam mi khyab mi brjod |*).

²⁶⁶ See the *TRĀ* (Mathes 2015: 72; 362):

When free from all superimpositions,
 True reality appears of its own accord.
 Expressions such as emptiness,
 Remove superimpositions from it. (TRĀ 33)

(*sarvāropa vinirmukte svatas tattvaṃ cakāśati | śūnyatādyabhīdhānais tu tatrāropanirākriyā ||; sgro btags kun las nges grol ba | bdag gis de nyid du brjod do | stong pa la sogs mngon brjod dang | de la sgro 'dogs bcod pa 'o |*).

In commenting on the Apratiṣṭhāna verses from the *Tattvaratnāvalī*, Vajrapāṇi quotes in his *Guruparamparākramopadeśa* a famous verse occurring frequently in Mahāyāna literature:²⁶⁷

Neither is there anything to be removed from it nor to be added;

The real should be seen as real, and upon seeing the real, one becomes liberated.

Through this quote, Vajrapāṇi advises the audience against either reification or over-negation.²⁶⁸ Several lines later in the commentary, he defines “not to abide in any reification or over-negation” as the knowledge of reality (*tattva*).²⁶⁹ However, unlike the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* in which this Mahāyāna verse occurs, Vajrapāṇi remains silent with regard to what “the real” really is that has nothing to be removed from or added to.²⁷⁰

Still, a Buddha-nature interpretation of “neither removing nor adding” along the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* line is in place as Vajrapāṇi maintains that *mahāmudrā* would manifest as variegated conceptuality (*rtog pa sna tshogs*) if not realized, and when

²⁶⁷ See the *GPKU* (400.20–21): *'di la bsal bya ci yang med || gzhag par bya ba gang yang med || yang dag nyid la yang dag blta || yang dag mthong na rnam par grol || zhes bya bas |*. For a list of texts in which it occurs, see Takasaki 1966: 300, note 53. The most famous work seems to be the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* (I. 154) in which the verse appears as follows (*RGVV*: 76.1–2): *nāpaneyam ataḥ kiṃcid upaneyam na kiṃcana | draṣṭavyam bhūtato bhūtaṃ bhūtadarśīvimucyate ||*; c.f. Mathes 2007: 559, note 63.

²⁶⁸ See the *GPKU* (400.22–26): *yod pa 'i sgro 'dogs pa dang | med pa 'i skur pa 'debs pa la mi gnas pa ste | sems nyid sna tshogs su snang ba nyams su myong ba nyid rten cing 'brel bar 'byung bas na ma skyes pa ste | ma skyes pa nyid skye ba ltar snang ba ste | skye ba dang skye ba med pa gnyis ka tha mi dad do ||*.

²⁶⁹ See the *GPKU* (401.21–23): *de bzhin du chos thams cad rang bzhin gyis ma skyes pa 'i ngo bo nyid kyis yod med gang yang mi gnas pas | yod med kyi sgro skur gang du 'ang mi gnas pa ni de kho na nyid kyi shes pa 'o ||*.

²⁷⁰ Mathes (2007: 559) delineates through the Mahāyāna intellectual history two lines of the Madhyamaka and Buddha-nature inquiries with regard to what this “neither removing nor adding” phrase really entails, represented respectively by the *Abhisamayālamkāra* and the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*. Mathes further points out that Vajrapāṇi’s quote suggests a proximity to the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, whereas his commentary is closer to the *Abhisamayālamkāra*.

realized, its manifold manifestation would be fused with its non-conceptual nature.²⁷¹ It is evident in the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* (I.155):²⁷²

The [Buddha-]dhātu is empty of adventitious stains,

Which is characteristic of being separable;

But it is not empty of excellent qualities,

Which is characteristic of being not separable.

As such, Vajrapāṇi is shown to have accounted for *apraṭiṣṭhāna* and *mahāmudrā* being aligned with the Buddha-nature line of Mahāyāna philosophy. The *mahāmudrā* attainment as well as its philosophical justification of Apraṭiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka thus find their doctrinal grounds in the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*.

4.1.3.2. Amanasikāra

Among the siddhas (especially Maitrīpa's circle), *amanasikāra* came to be used as a key Buddhist technical term for describing both the practice and goal of *mahāmudrā*. Despite the term's own long history,²⁷³ two Mahāyāna sūtras – the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra* and the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* – served as direct scriptural sources for reading

²⁷¹ See the *GP KU* (422.8–12): *de bzhin du phyag rgya chen po zung du 'jug pa'i rang bzhin ma rtogs nas rtog pa sna tshogs su snang ste | yang dag par rtogs na rtog pa sna tshogs kyi rang bzhin nyid mi rtog pa'i rang bzhin du zung du 'jug pa yin la | mi rtog pa nyid rtog pa sna tshogs su snang ste | 'dir rtog pa bsal bar bya ba'am | mi rtog pa gzhas par bya ba ci'ang med do ||*; c.f. Mathes 2007: 561, note 73.

²⁷² See the *RGV* (76.3–4; Takasaki 1966: 301): *sūnya āgantukair dhātuḥ savinirbhāgalakṣaṇaiḥ | aśūnyo 'nuttarair dharmair avinirbhāgalakṣaṇaiḥ ||*.

²⁷³ Mathes (2009: 4–5) briefly examines the scriptural witnesses of *amanasikāra* in early Buddhism before the rise of Mahāyāna.

amanasikāra into the *mahāmudrā* practice and goal in works composed by Maitrīpa and his disciples.²⁷⁴

A sūtra influential to the embedded commentary (*vyākhyā*) on the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra* takes *amanasikāra* as the negation of *manasikāra* (mental engagement) and makes it along with other negative predicates as one of the awakened attributes of the Buddha.²⁷⁵ The same passage occurs as one of the two *Jñānālokālaṃkāra* quotations inserted into the *Caturmudrānvaya*. The *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* associates *amanasikāra* with a graded elimination of signs (*nimitta*) in the practice of a *bodhisattva*, the ultimate goal of which is to realize or approach the non-conceptual sphere via correct mental engagement (*samyāṃmanasikāra*). In another word, the *amanasikāra* elimination of signs goes in tandem with a correct *manasikāra* cultivating non-conceptual knowledge.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Mathes (2009: 334–335) observes that Maitrīpa’s circle shared a similar scriptural pool for sūtric quotation with Vimalamitra who authored the *Cig car ’jug pa rnam par mi rtog pa’i bsgom don* about two centuries earlier. Vimalamitra’s contains references to a similar set of sūtras such as the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* and the *Pratītyasamutpādayakārikā* to account for a simultaneous and non-conceptual form of realization. For Vimalamitra, the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* plays the same role in supporting a non-analytical *amanasikāra* approach to non-conceptual knowledge, that is, to become mentally disengaged with the misguided projection of *lakṣaṇa* or *nimitta* onto reality. As for Vimalamitra’s quotation of the famous “neither removing nor adding” verse from the *Pratītyasamutpādayakārikā*, the purpose is to advocate the idea of refraining from either reification or over-negation for a direct access to the nature of the mind, which is ontologically presupposed by the simultaneity between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. This is in line with Rāmapāla’s agenda in quoting the same verse.

²⁷⁵ See the *JĀA* (146, II.1–2): *avikalpa tasmaṃkalpa apratiṣṭhitamānasah | asmṛtyamanasikāra nirālambaḥ namo stu te ||*. Mathes (2009: 5, note 13) translates this passage: “Homage to you, who are without imagined thoughts, whose intellect is not based [on anything], who are without mindfulness, who become mentally disengaged, and who are without any cognitive object.”

²⁷⁶ The *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* associates *nimittas* with two types of *vikalpa*, the natural type (*praktivikalpa*) and interpretative type (*nirūpaṇavikalpa*); the latter is further divided into three subtypes in terms of their respective associations with the remedy, suchness, and the attainment. Similarly in the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*, the same fourfold set of *nimittas* are to be abandoned by cultivating non-conceptual knowledge. This utters a need for *manasikāra*, that is, to direct

Worthy of note is that Kamalaśīla in his commentary on the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* defines *amanasikāra* as the result of analytically-oriented *vipaśyanā* practice, and illustrates its transformation into non-conceptual knowledge with the famous metaphor of the fire having burned the wood which has kindled the fire itself.²⁷⁷ In contrast with Kamalaśīla’s analytical model, Saraha advocates a direct access to the nature of the mind (even without formal tantric practices, but only with the help of the teacher’s *upadeśa*) as his *amanasikāra* approach to *mahāmudrā*.

Maitrīpa maintains in the *Sekanirdeśa* (v. 36) that *mahāmudrā* is realized through abandoning the remedy, suchness, and attainment,²⁷⁸ thus bringing the *mahāmudrā* practice of *amanasikāra* into line with the *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*. It turns out that both Kamalaśīla and Maitrīpa share the idea that *amanasikāra* is not a mere negation of all the mental activities. A major difference between the two lies in whether the mediating effect of analysis is emphasized or rejected.

one’s attention to realizing the non-conceptual nature of the mind throughout the four-step contemplative procedure. See Mathes 2009: 6.

²⁷⁷ See the *NPDhT* (131a6–7): *yang dag par so sor rtog pa’i mtshan nyid ni ’dir yid la mi byed par dgongs so | de ni rnam par rtog pa’i ngo bo nyid yin mod kyi | ’on kyang de nyid las byung ba yang dag pa’i ye shes kyi mes de bsregs par ’gyur te | shing gnyis drud las byung ba’i mes shing de gnyis sreg par byed pa bzhin no |*. Mathes (2009: 7–8) translates this passage: “It is the *nimitta* of precise investigation which is intended [by the expression] ‘to become mentally disengaged’. It has the nature of being conceptual, but it is burnt by the pure wisdom fire arising from it, in the same way as a fire kindled by rubbing two pieces of wood burns those very pieces.”

²⁷⁸ See the *SN* (Mathes 2015: 109; 388):

He who does not abide in the domain of the remedy,
Is not attached to true reality,
And who does even not desire the fruit,
Finds *mahāmudrā*. (SN 36)

(*pratipakṣe sthito naiva tattvāsakto ’pi naiva yaḥ | gārdhyaṃ naiva phale yasya mahāmudrāṃ sa vindati ||; gnyen po’i phyogs la mi gnas shing | de nyid la yang mi chags la | gang gi ’bras bu’ang mi ’dod pa | de yis phyag rgya chen po shes |*).

When Maitrīpa started to integrate his *mahāmudrā* teachings into mainstream Buddhism, he saw it necessary to compose a work to justify the usage of *amanasikāra* as a proper Buddhist technical term for defining *mahāmudrā* in a correct way. The *Amanasikārādhāra* perfectly serves this purpose. Mathes (2009) traces a two-tiered interpretation of *amanasikāra* in the *Amanasikārādhāra*: 1) the negation of dualistic conceptual engagements and 2) luminous self-empowerment.²⁷⁹ This displays a combination of cataphatic and apophatic descriptions pertaining to the soteriological approach to Buddhahood, a structure underlying the entire Indian Mahāmudrā corpus.

4.2. Mahāyāna philosophical formula: Buddhist ways of discursively mapping out a cognitive modality

Maitrīpa and his disciples accounted for *mahāmudrā* – a term highly charged with tantric connotations and valorized in the post-tantric context – in exoteric terms through deploying philosophical sources of inspiration they drew from the Mahāyāna sūtric and scholastic pool. On the basis of shared experiential grounds on non-conceptual realization, *amanasikāra* and Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka were read into the Mahāmudrā practice and goal. Moreover, the philosophical predilection in Mahāmudrā towards the mystical-positive strand of Buddhist thinking brought its interpretation into alignment with the Buddha-nature doctrine. In this section, I will look back on certain aspects of Mahāyāna intellectual history to trace the roots and evolution of the exoteric philosophical threads which later came to be woven into Mahāmudrā’s fabric.

²⁷⁹ See Mathes 2009: 10–20.

4.2.1. Mahāyāna intellectual landscape: Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and the syncretic tendency

The fundamental point of dissent between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra remains the question of how the illusionistic view of the phenomenal world can be best accounted for in multiple layers. Mādhyamikas such as Nāgārjuna (*fl. c. 2nd cent.*) accounted for their two-truth (*satyadvaya*) ontology in terms of conditioned origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and emptiness (*śūnyatā*), and advocated a soteriological path whereby one gets rid of all conceptual elaborations (*prapañca*). To ground this illusionistic ontology on a more constructive basis, Yogācāra philosophers articulated a three-nature (*svabhāvatraya*) theory of the structure of consciousness (*vijñāna*) as well as its transformation (*āśraya-parāvṛtti*). Though early Madhyamaka and Yogācāra philosophies seem more compatible than not,²⁸⁰ these two Mahāyāna scholastic camps ran into significant conflicts towards the 6th century in a disputatious climate where Buddhist scholars fought for posts and recognition at places such as the Nālandā University.²⁸¹ Meanwhile, the introduction of “valid knowledge” (*pramāṇa*) – under many circumstances applied in the context of formal debating – dramatically changed the

²⁸⁰ As Lindtner (1997) observes, a major difference between the Madhyamaka- and Yogācāra-oriented camps lies in the nominalistic and the idealistic understandings of the term *cittamātra* (mind-only), each accounted for in the light of the *satyadvaya* and the *svabhāvatraya* models respectively. However, the controversy is more terminological than essential. For a review of modern scholarship regarding the Madhyamaka-Yogācāra relations, see Hanson 1998: 11–16. While it is commonly held that Yogācāra “arose as a conscious response to Madhyamaka,” scholars roughly bifurcate into the “deviation” and the “fulfillment” theories, that is, whether Yogācāra should be depicted as a further development, or unfortunate corruption, of Madhyamaka. Notwithstanding the scholarly debate, Hanson’s conclusion (1998: 265–7) indicates a complementary and compatible relationship between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra at least in the early stages.

²⁸¹ See, for instance, Anacker 1984: 3; c.f. Hanson 1998: 17

Mahāyāna discursive landscape. The Vijñānavāda tradition thus originated out of the classical Yogācāra tradition with the discursive contours largely shaped by the new developments in Buddhist epistemology (Pramāṇavāda). This Vijñānavāda tradition soon found itself in ongoing doctrinal disputes with Mādhyamika representatives such as Bhavya (c. 500–570) and Candrakīrti (c. 600–650).²⁸²

An early syncretic attempt was traceable in Bhavya’s works. To balance the overly transcendent Madhyamaka metaphysics with descriptions about immanence, Bhavya assimilated all Buddhist scholastic schools into Madhyamaka and subsumed the Yogācāra three-nature model under the two-truth scheme,²⁸³ thus laying out sufficient discursive space for levels of view and practice to unfold at the conventional level. Accepting external objects as relative truth and rejecting the Vijñānavādin notion of reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*), he understood the famous Mahāyāna term *cittamātra* (mind-only) in a nominalistic sense of *svacittamayamātra* – that is, external world originated from the mind (*citta*) which is in itself insubstantial (*adravyasat*).²⁸⁴

Continuing Bhavya’s inclusive Madhyamaka line, Śāntarakṣita (725–788) in his *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* admitted the mind-only notion at the conventional level, but

²⁸² As for the distinction between these two Yogācāra streams – the classical one and the modernist one labeled as Vijñānavāda – see, for instance, Ueda 1967. A fundamental difference between the two currents lies in whether the existence of *svasaṃvedana* is admitted.

²⁸³ Lindtner (1997: 199) notes: “Bhavya is the first, for all we know, to attempt to reduce *svabhāvatraya* to *satyadvaya* on a grand scale. He picks up the old distinction of correct and perverted *saṃvṛti-satya*, mainly to enable himself to reduce *parikalpita*- and *paratantra*- to those two forms of *saṃvṛti-satya*.” This, however, has inflicted on Bhavya criticism from the Vijñānavādin camp. In his **Madhyamakārthasaṃgraha*, Bhavya identified from within the *paramārtha* a *saparyāya-paramārtha* – the ultimate truth associated with conceptualization and verbalization – and from within the *saṃvṛti* a *tathyaṣaṃvṛti* – the true conventional truth possessed of causal efficiency (*arthakriyāsamārtha*); see Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 64.

²⁸⁴ See Lindtner 1997: 187–9.

presented it as being transcended at the ultimate-truth level.²⁸⁵ Like Bhavya, Śāntarakṣita identifies the Yogācāra imagined (*parikalpita*) and dependent (*paratantra*) natures respectively as the perverted and correct conventional truths (*mithyā-* and *tathya-saṃvṛtisatya*) accepted by Mādhyamikas. Unlike Bhavya, he accepted the self-luminous *svasaṃvedana* (*rang rig rang gsal*) as a correct conventional truth leading up to the Madhyamaka goal of establishing non-origination (*anutpāda*) free from the four extremes (*catuṣkoṭi*).²⁸⁶

The Buddhist doxographical practice of exegetical identification and systematic classification of intellectual currents along a hierarchy has taken place within syncretistic traditions such as the Bhavya-Śāntarakṣita line of Madhyamaka currents, and was carried on by a long line of Tibetan Buddhist scholars starting from Ye-shes-sde and dPal-brtsegs (both *fl.* late 8th/early 9th century). Works such as Bhavya's *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* and Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha* are important Indian precedents and exert influences upon the Tibetan doxographical tradition.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ See the *MA* (verses 92–3): *sems tsam la ni brten nas su | phyi rol dngos med shes par bya | tshul 'dir brten nas de la yang | shin tu bdag med shes par bya || tshul gnyis shing rta zhon nas su | rigs pa 'i srab skyogs 'ju byed pa | de dag de phyir ji bzhin don | theg pa chen po pa nyid 'thob ||*. For its English translation, see Ichigō (1989: 221, 223): Based on [the standpoint of] mind-only one must know the non-existence of external entities. Based on this standpoint [of the lack of intrinsic nature of all dharmas] one must know that there is no self at all even in that (which is mind only). Therefore, those who hold the reins of logic while riding the carriage of the two systems [Mādhyamika and Yogācāra] attain the stage of a true Mahāyānist. C.f. Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 90.

²⁸⁶ Śāntarakṣita's teacher Jñānagarbha (c. 700–60), while inheriting Bhavya's system without much innovation, departed from the latter in embracing Dharmakīrti's style. It was in Śāntarakṣita's that the assimilation of Yogācāra into Madhyamaka reaches its culmination whereby Dharmakīrti's self-luminous *svasaṃvedana* was accepted as the true *saṃvṛtisatya*; see Lindtner 1997: 199–200; Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 90–2.

²⁸⁷ See Tam & Shiu 2012: 10–11. For a brief introduction of these two works, see Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 62–63, 89–90.

As shown in both Ye-shes-sde's *lTa ba'i khyad par* and dPal-brtsegs's *lTa ba'i rim pa bshad pa*, Tibetans first perceived Śāntaraksita's and Bhavya's Madhyamaka currents as superior to Hīnayāna and Vijñānavāda, labeling the former pair as “Yogācāra-Madhyamaka” (*rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma*) and “Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka” (*mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma*) respectively.²⁸⁸ Whereas both Sautrāntika- and Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas share in common the ultimate-truth postulation on emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and non-origination (*anutpāda*), they differ in the conventional-truth descriptions about *cittamātra* – that is, while the former frames its understanding within a *pratītyasamutpāda* ontology, the latter subscribes to a mental idealism of *svasaṃvedana*.²⁸⁹ However, it seems Ye-shes-sde has accorded Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka

²⁸⁸ Seyfort Ruegg (2000: 23–4) notes “a comparable distinction between the ‘external’ Madhyamaka (*phy'i dbu ma* or *phyi rol pa'i dbu ma par 'dod pa*) – which accepts an outer object on the surface-level of *saṃvṛti* – and the ‘internal’ Yoga-Madhyamaka (*nañ gi rnal 'byor gyi/pa'i dbu ma*) – i.e., the synthesizing Yogācāra-Madhyamaka of Śāntiraksita's school which follows the Vijñānavāda in accepting only the mind as real (*sems tsam*) – is made in a Dunhuang manuscript.”

²⁸⁹ See the *lTa khyad* (180–6): *de la rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma'i lugs ni | kun rdzob du rnam par shes pa tsam du smra ba dang mthun te | rnam par shes pas yul shes pa yang | yul nyid rnam par shes pa'i rang bzhin yin pas | 'brel pa yod pa'i phyir || rang gi rig pas shes par rung gi | yul gzhan yin bar 'dod na ni | shes pa dang 'brel pa myed pas | rig par myi rung ngo || phyi rol gyi rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba snang ba yang | dper na | rmyi lam na mthong ba'i rnams yul myed kyi | sems nyid mthong ba dang 'dra ste || ... de lta bas na sems tsam la brten nas | phyi rol gyi yul myed par rig pa bya'o | dbu ma'i tshul 'di la brten nas | sems de yang bdag myed par rtogs par bya ste || ... de lta bas na dbu ma'i tshul 'di || mdo sde dang yang myi 'gal lo zhes 'chad do || mdo sde dbu ma'i lugs ni | a tsa rya na ga rdzu na mdzad pa'i lugs dang | mthun bar phyi nang gyi dngos po thams cad rten cing 'brel par 'byung bar 'chad de || kun rdzob du ni rgyu rkyen las byung bas || sgyu ma tsam du yod la || don dam par ni bdag dang | gzhan gnyi ga dang | rgyu myed pa las skyer myi rung zhes gtan tshigs rnam pa bzhis dngos po rnams skye ba myed do || bdag las myi skye zhes bya ba ni | bdag rang las myi skye ba'o || ... de ltar gang gi phyir dngos po skye ba myi ['thad] pa de'i phyir | skye ba myi srid de | skye ba brjod pa ni tha snyad brjod na tsam du zad do ||*

And the *lTa rim* (260): *mtshan nyid theg pa'ang rnam pa gsum | rnam rig pa dang rnal 'byor pa | de bzhin mdo sde dbu ma'o || rnam rig phyi rol mtho yor mi | sab mo rta ltar med bzhin du | rang gi rnam shes 'khrul snang 'dod | don dam ye shes skad cig 'dod || rnal 'byor dbu ma'i kun rdzob mthun | don dam stong pa ma skyes 'dod | mdo sde kun rdzob sgyu ma tsam | yul rnams logs nas snang bar lta | don dam mtha' gnyis bral yi | dbu ma chen por 'dod pa'o ||*

a superior status in deciding that at the conventional-truth level the *pratītyasamutpāda* ontology transcends the Vijñānavādin postulation of *svasaṃvedana*, the latter being considered as only expedient.²⁹⁰

However, while the presence of Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka in Tibetan scholarly exegesis seems to be only doxographical, Yogācāra-Madhyamaka came to prominence in Tibet as a scholastic tradition thanks to the proselytizing activities of Śāntarakṣita and his disciple Kamalaśīla. The major works belonging to Śāntarakṣita’s Yogācāra-Madhyamaka circle had been translated into Tibetan around the turn of the 9th century. Jñānagarbha’s (c. 700–760) *Satyadvayavibhaṅga*, Śāntarakṣita’s *Madhyamakālamkāra* and Kamalaśīla’s *Madhyamakāloka* were known in Tibet as the “trio of the eastern Svātantrikas” (*rang rgyud shar gsum*). Both Ye-shes-sde and dPal-brtsegs were involved in the translation program. As for Bhavya’s work, only the *Prajñāpradīpa* had been translated into Tibetan during the same period by Jñānagarbha in association with Klu’i-rgyal-mtshan. His other main works, the *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* and its commentary *Tarkajvālā*, however, were translated later in the 11th century.²⁹¹

Thus, we have reasons to believe that it was in reality Śāntarakṣita’s doctrinal system that informed the contemporary and slightly later Tibetan doxographical practice, and the presence of Bhavya’s stemmed largely from the intellectual continuity between

²⁹⁰ See the *lTa khyad* (188): *rnam par shes pa tsam du smra bas phyi rol gyi yul myed kyi || sems nyid don du snang ngo zhes bya ba yang | myi rung ste | ... thog ma myed pa nas | gzugs su rtog pa ’i bag chag smyin pas | de ltar snang ngo zhes byar yang | yul yong myed na der rtog pa myi ’byung bas | de bag chags kyang yod par myi ’gyur ro || ... ’phags pa lang kar gshegs pa las stsogs pa las || phyi rol gyi don myed kyi || sems de ltar snang ngo zhes ’byung ba yang || dngos po don dam par yod par ’dogs pa dang | sems tsam du bshad pas | ’dul ba la phan gdags pa ’i phyir | rten cing ’brel par ’byung ba ’i don | rang bzhin gyis dngos por grub pa myed pa la | log pa ’i rnam par rtog pas | dngos por sgro btags pa la dgongs nas | de skad gsungs pa yin no zhes bshad do ||.*

²⁹¹ See Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 12–3.

these two Madhyamaka currents which, however, were doxographically distinguished in retrospect.

Accepted as the orthodox classification of highest teachings since the “Earlier Dissemination” (*snga dar*) of Tibetan Buddhism (up till c. 850), this Yogācāra-Sautrāntika distinction of Madhyamaka extended into the “Later Dissemination” (*phyi dar*) which started approximately from the late 10th century. However, its privileged status along the doctrinal hierarchy was challenged by an alternative classification of Madhyamaka into *Prāsaṅgika (*thal 'gyur ba*) and *Svātantrika (*rang rgyud pa*) which took shape in the 13th century.²⁹² It is beyond the scope of this research to further the discussion into issues such as how scholars tried to integrate these two classificatory paradigms or how their tensions became intertwined with the “Later Dissemination” polemics.²⁹³

Rather than being just a polemical presentation of philosophical schools in ascending order, Buddhist doxography contains within it the presentation in a stepwise manner the practical stages leading up to the ultimate end of Buddhahood.²⁹⁴ As indicated by its emic expression *siddhānta* – or *grub mtha'* in Tibetan – the doctrinal hierarchy sketches different layers of accomplishment (*siddha*, *grub pa*), the end or limit (*anta*,

²⁹² While the first reference to Bhavya’s branch by *rang rgyud pa* (*Svātantrika) ever found is from Jayānanda’s (*fl.* 13th century) works, the earliest Tibetan scholar to distinguish Candrakīrti’s branch from Bhavya’s with the appellation *thal 'gyur ba* (*Prāsaṅgika) was reportedly Pa-tshab Nyi-ma-grags; see Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 16–22. For a specific treatment of this *Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika distinction, see Seyfort Ruegg 2010: 159–194.

²⁹³ For a sketch of the historical development in terms of doxographical arrangement up till the time of Tsong-kha-pa (1357–1419), see Tam & Shiu 2012: 18–27.

²⁹⁴ Kajiyama (1978) suggests that Kamalaśīla has followed a Buddhist doxography in crafting the fourfold meditation in his *Bhāvanākrama*. Bentor (2002) raises the question whether the meditative scheme informed, or is modeled upon, the doxographical structure. Either way, however, the meditative nature of Buddhist doxographical presentation should not be ignored.

mtha ') of which is to be surpassed by its succeeding stage.²⁹⁵ Therefore, the underlying logic is to account for a progressive scheme whereby the view presupposed by each level both builds on and transcends that of the previous level. Deeply embedded and underlying this philosophical progression is the common thread of Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation, which found its expression in scriptural literature as early as the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and came to be adopted and appropriated from time to time throughout Mahāyāna intellectual history.

4.2.2. To awaken image-free or beyond: Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation and its formula

Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation is accomplished through a scale of spiritual progress whereby one first abides in mind-only (*cittamātra*) by a mental withdrawal from external objects (*artha*), then realizes non-dual consciousness free from the subject-object dichotomy, and finally transcends consciousness itself to remain in a cognitive state of non-conceptual gnosis (*nirvikalpa-jñāna*). As the common ultimate goal of Mahāyāna, Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation was consciously central – in ways explicit or implicit – to variant and competitive lines of philosophical inquiry such as Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, or the synthesis of both. Across the Mahāyāna scholastic terrain, a unifying thread was granting ontological/epistemological validation – though in different models of interpretation – to Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ See Tam & Shiu 2012: 47–56. For more discussions on the *grub mtha* ' genre of Tibetan literature, see Mimaki (1982: 1–12).

²⁹⁶ Lindtner (1997) traces the entire intellectual tradition in Indian Buddhism – mainly of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra as well as the synthesis of both – until the time of Kamalaśīla

An early scriptural instance of Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation can be traced to the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (X. 256–258):²⁹⁷

256. When the [Yogin] enters upon Mind-only (*cittamātra*), he will cease discriminating an external world; establishing himself in apprehension on suchness (*tathatā*) he will pass on Mind-only.

257. Having passed on Mind-only, he passes on the state of imagelessness; when he establishes himself in the state of imagelessness (*nirābhāsa*), he sees not [even] *mahāyāna*.

258. The state of non-striving (*anābhoga*) is quiescent and thoroughly purified with the [original] vow; one does not see the most excellent knowledge of egolessness in [the state of] imagelessness.

As Lindtner notes, both Mādhyamikas and Yogācārins in their early stages of development seemed to be aware of the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*,²⁹⁸ which is important for our understanding of the relationship between this *Laṅkāvatāra* progressive scheme and early Mahāyāna scholastic threads. Parallels to the *Laṅkāvatāra* scheme are especially found in

through the axis of Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation featured by *cittamātra* as its starting point. Bentor (2002) takes up the period from Kamalaśīla on, and extends our view of this common thread running across the Mahāyāna traditions into the tantric fold.

²⁹⁷ My translation is based on Suzuki's (1932: 246–7), but I make important revisions, yet with his choice of English terminology kept. For Nanjio's (1923) Sanskrit edition of the verses, see the *LAS* (X. 256–258):

cittamātram samāruhya bāhyam arthaṃ na kalpayet |
tathatālabane sthitvā cittamātram atikramet || 256 ||

cittamātram atikramya nirābhāsam atikramet |
nirābhāsthitō yogī mahāyānaṃ na paśyati || 257 ||

anābhogagatiḥ śāntā prañidhānair viśodhitā |
jñānaṃ nirātmakaṃ śreṣṭhaṃ nirābhāse na paśyati || 258 ||.

²⁹⁸ See Lindtner 1997: 159–160, note 4.

Yogācāra literature, in which progressive refinements of the subjective mind or the objective apprehension are emphasized.²⁹⁹

The terminological ambiguity in the *Laṅkāvatāra* verses, however, has left the Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation formula open to interpretation. The controversy lies in the reading of whether “*mahāyāna*” or “the most excellent knowledge of egolessness” is “seen” or not in the image-free (*nirābhāsa*) status.³⁰⁰ At stake here is whether or not a positive description about the experience of ultimacy is admitted – that is, while the *mahāyāna*-is-seen reading shows an apophatic approach to Buddhahood by anchoring ultimacy in the image-free, the *mahāyāna*-is-not-seen reading indicates that the experience of ultimacy transcends merely being image-free and thus is amenable to a cataphasis. Makidono (2015) delineates two scholarly lines – respectively along these two different readings – running throughout the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist intellectual history. The *mahāyāna*-is-seen reading is adopted in scholarly treatises such as Bhavya’s *Ratnapradīpa*, Kamalaśīla’s *Madhyamakāloka*, and Ratnākaraśānti’s *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa*, *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*, and *Madhyamakapratipadāsiddhi*. It can also be found in the *Bhāvanākrama* ascribed to Nāgārjuna, the **Kramapraveśikabhāvanārtha* ascribed to Vimalamitra, and Ye-shes-sde’s *lTa ba’i khyad par*. The *mahāyāna*-is-not-seen reading is followed by the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* itself in different linguistic recensions (i.e., Nanjio’s edition in Sanskrit, Tibetan bKa’-’gyur

²⁹⁹ See Lindtner 1997: 169–175; Bentor 2002: 50.

³⁰⁰ Lindtner’s edition (Lindtner 1997: 160) in reference to Nanjio’s, for instance, offers *mahāyānaṃ paśyati* at the end of Verse 257, dropping *na*; and it offers *nirābhāseṇa paśyati* – instead of *nirābhāse na paśyati* – at the end of Verse 258. This reading leads to a semantic rendering of a totally opposite direction from Nanjio’s edition, the key difference being whether “*mahāyāna*” or “the most excellent knowledge of egolessness” is seen or not.

editions such as Peking, sDe-dge, and sTog, as well as two Chinese editions *T* no. 671 and no. 672).³⁰¹

Śāntarakṣita's appropriated the *Laṅkāvatāra* verses in his conclusion to the *Madhyamaālaṅkāra*:³⁰²

Based on [the standpoint of] mind-only (*sems tsam*) one must know the non-existence of external entities.

Based on this standpoint [of the lack of intrinsic nature of all dharmas] one must know that there is no self (*bdag med*) at all even in that (which is mind only).

Therefore, those who hold the reins of logic while riding the carriage of the two systems [Mādhyamika and Yogācāra] attain the stage of a true Mahāyānist.

As a Mādhyamika, Śāntarakṣita here reduces Vijñānavāda to the mind-only (*cittamātra*) doctrine and subsumes it under the non-self (*anātma*) doctrine of Madhyamaka. In the commentary *Madhyamakālaṅkāravṛtti*, Śāntarakṣita explicitly draws on the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* as scriptural authority for his position, which is reproduced by Kamalaśīla in the *Madhyamakālaṅkārapañjikā*.³⁰³

Elsewhere in the *Bhāvanākrama*, Kamalaśīla provides a detailed explanation of the *Laṅkāvatāra* verses based on a fourfold meditative paradigm:³⁰⁴ the *yogi* 1) first analyzes external objects and realizes them as mind-only; 2) then transcends mind-only

³⁰¹ See Makidono 2015: 176–178.

³⁰² See Ichigō (1989: 221, 223). For the Tibetan, see the *MA* (verses 92–3): *sems tsam la ni brten nas su | phyi rol dngos med shes par bya | tshul 'dir brten nas de la yang | shin tu bdag med shes par bya || tshul gnyis shing rta zhon nas su | rigs pa 'i srab skyogs 'ju byed pa | de dag de phyir ji bzhin don | theg pa chen po pa nyid 'thob ||*.

³⁰³ See Bentor 2002: 45.

³⁰⁴ See the *BhK* I (Tucci 1958: 210–211; 259–261); c.f. Bentor 2002: 46.

through analyzing the subject and perceives suchness (*tathatā, de bzhin nyid*) with non-dual knowledge (*advayajñāna, gnyis med pa'i shes pa*) free from dichotomous appearance (*advayanirābhāsa, gnyis su snang ba med pa*); 3) then passes beyond even the non-dual knowledge and abides in the image-free knowledge (*nirābhāsajñāna, snang ba med pa'i shes pa*); and 4) finally abides in the realization that all phenomena lacks essence and thereby enter non-conceptual concentration (*nirvikalpa-samādhi, rnam par mi rtog pa'i ting nge 'dzin*). In the final stage, the *yogi* sees *mahāyāna* on account of abiding in the non-dual and image-free knowledge whatever the circumstance is.

Although Kamalaśīla adopts the *mahāyāna-is-seen* reading (which indicates one see *mahāyāna* in the *nirābhāsa*) in his quotation of the *Laṅkāvatāra* verses, the fourfold meditative scheme laid out in his *Bhāvanākrama* places “seeing *mahāyāna*” in the stage of non-conceptual concentration beyond the image-free, which actually indicates a subscription to a *mahāyāna-is-not-seen* reading. Moreover, doctrinally speaking, Kamalaśīla seems to have unpacked – if not extending – Śāntarakṣita’s ultimate-truth postulation in the *Madhyamakālamkāra*, that is, that the Mādhyamika non-origination (*anutpāda*) which merely transcends the Vijñānavādin mind-only (*cittamātra*) is further differentiated into the stages of non-dual knowledge, image-free knowledge, and non-conceptual concentration.

Like Kamalaśīla, Ratnākaraśānti (*fl. c. 1000*) appropriates the *Laṅkāvatāra* verses with the *mahāyāna-is-seen* reading into a fourfold meditative scheme, and in specific elaboration actually subscribes to a *mahāyāna-is-not-seen* reading. In several of his works, Ratnākaraśānti describes a path of four *yoga-bhūmis* (*rnal 'byor gyi sa bzhi po*) which maps out the progressive refinements of one’s objective apprehension (*ālabana*,

dmigs pa) until its cessation: one first apprehends on external object (*dnegos po*), then on mind-only (*cittamātra*), on suchness (*tathatā, de bzhin nyid*), and finally sees the *mahāyāna* (*theg pa chen po*).³⁰⁵

It seems that Ratnākaraśānti shows some ambivalence in different works as to where the image-free (*nirābhāsa*) – which he consistently believes to be elicited by the apprehension on suchness – should be placed in the scheme. While his *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti-madhyamapratipadāsiddhi* attributes the image-free to the third level of apprehension on suchness, the *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa* equates the image-free with the fourth level of seeing *mahāyāna*.³⁰⁶ However, the difference does not seem to imply any deep significance. To place the image-free either in the third or fourth stage is more of a matter of difference in discursive emphasis, that is, to see the image-free as a status to be transcended by, or to be embraced in, the final stage. The two tendencies do not seem to be fundamentally contradictory in the experiential domain.

The difference of readings between *mahāyāna*-is-seen and *mahāyāna*-is-not-seen was further read into a distinction between Madhyamaka without *ābhāsa* (*snang med dbu ma*) and Madhyamaka with *ābhāsa* (*snang bcas dbu ma*) in the 18th/19th-century Tibetan non-sectarian (*ris med*) movements. Specifically, while the *mahāyāna*-is-seen reading admits the image-free as the ultimate and thus alludes to an intrinsic-emptiness (*rang stong*) notion, the *mahāyāna*-is-not-seen reading admits the status beyond the image-free

³⁰⁵ While the second *ālambana* on *cittamātra* drops the cognized object (*grāhya, gzung ba*) apprehended by the first *ālambana* and abides in the cognizing subject (*grāhaka, 'dzin pa*), the third *ālambana* on *tathatā* is achieved by a freedom from both; see, for instance, the *MAV-MPS*: ff. 135b8–136b3; c.f. Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 122–3.

³⁰⁶ See the *MAU*: ff. 266a3–8.

as the ultimate and thus alludes to an extrinsic-emptiness (*gzhan stong*) notion.³⁰⁷

Totalizing response to the entire intellectual history of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism notwithstanding, this Ris-med summary best captures the essence of the *mahāyāna*-is-not-seen reading in anchoring it in the Buddha-nature line of interpretation. It is no coincidence that Kamalaśīla and Ratnākaraśānti adopted a cataphatic description of awakening (i.e., seeing *mahāyāna*) beyond image-free, and at the same time both scholars subscribed to the Buddha-nature doctrine.³⁰⁸ Especially for Ratnākaraśānti – a great systematizer of tantric philosophy on the basis of Mahāyāna scholasticism – his Buddha-nature expositions were intimately connected with his tantric background.

4.2.3. Buddha-nature and its integration into the tantric fold

First articulated in the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* (second half of the 3rd century), the Buddha-nature (*tathāgatagarbha*) doctrine (“all sentient beings possess a *buddha* within”) developed along the Mahāyāna scriptural line represented by sūtras such as the *Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśaparivarta* and the *Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanādanirdeśasūtra*, in which Buddha-nature was further established as a common ground of both *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

The famous treatise *Ratnagotravibhāga* (c. 4th century) systematized the Buddha-nature

³⁰⁷ See Makidono 2015: 179–183.

³⁰⁸ Kamalaśīla seems to be one of the earliest Madhyamaka teachers to incorporate the Tathāgatagarbha idea into his scholastic articulations and thoughts; see Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 94–5, note 308. In his *Madhyamakāloka*, Kamalaśīla interprets the teaching “all sentient beings have Buddha-nature” in the sense that all sentient beings are pervaded by the *dharma-dhātu* characterized by selflessness and natural luminosity (*prakṛtiprabhāsvara*); see the *MĀk* (ff. 242b4–7): *sems can thams cad ni de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po can no zhes bya ba 'dis kyang | thams cad bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub kyi go 'phang thob par rung ba nyid du yongs su bstan te | de bzhin gshegs pa'i sgra ni chos kyi dbyings gang zag dang chos la bdag med pa'i mtshan nyid rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba yin par brjod par bzhed pa'i phyir ro |*; c.f. Kano 2016: 9–10, note 34.

teachings contained within these sūtras as well as a number of other scriptures – such as the *Jñānālokāṃkāra* – which do not bear a direct mention of *tathāgatagarbha*. This Buddha-nature strand of Buddhist thoughts countered and reinterpreted the classical Prajñāpāramitā position that all the phenomena are empty in nature. Narrowing down the sense of emptiness to an “extrinsic kind,” the *Ratnagotravibhāga* maintains that Buddha-nature is empty only of adventitious stains, but not of its own nature. As such, the *Ratnagotravibhāga* classified the scriptural tradition subscribing to the Buddha-nature doctrine as superior to that of the Prajñāpāramitā tradition.³⁰⁹

The Buddha-nature doctrine, nonetheless, had not developed into an independent school as Madhyamaka and Yogācāra; rather, it was gradually assimilated into these two scholastic fields. Kano (2016) sketches such processes based on philosophical treatises composed from the 5th through 8th centuries. As Kano observes, certain Yogācāra philosophers were drawn to the Buddha-nature doctrine out of their wishes to “stress the innate purity of the mind,” but fundamental incompatibilities rendered the effort to unify the two doctrines a difficult task, for “one will necessarily incline one way or the other, but not both.” As for the Madhyamaka camp, Kano summarizes the ongoing discussions into three types: “1) identification of Buddha-nature as emptiness, 2) integration of

³⁰⁹ See Kano 2016: 1–3. However, the scholastic systems of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra remained unaddressed at this point. Despite its usage of terms common to both Abhidharma and Yogācāra (sometimes with different doctrinal concerns though), the *Ratnagotravibhāga* displays a closer link to Mahāyāna sūtras in terms of vocabulary and quotation than scholastic modes of composition. In addition, Kano (2016: 6, note 17) reports occurrences of the term *tathāgatagarbha* in tantras.

Buddha-nature into the Single Vehicle doctrine, and 3) judgement as to whether the Buddha-nature doctrine belongs to the definitive teaching or the provisional teaching.”³¹⁰

Curiously, no trace of the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* was found in Indian Buddhist doctrinal compositions between the 7th and 10th centuries. It was not until the 11th century that Indian teachers started to pick up passages from the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* to ground their philosophical articulations. That the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* resurfaced to the Buddhist scholarly attention in the 11th century coincided with the famous story of Maitrīpa’s rediscovery of the work – along with the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* – from a stūpa. With the earliest accounts occurring in the 13th-century Tibetan materials, the rediscovery story was widely accepted by later Tibetan traditions.³¹¹ Moreover, Maitrīpa’s knowledge of the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* was attested in his work *Pañcatathāgatamudrāvivarāṇa* included in the *Amanasikāra* cycle, in which he quotes the treatise in order to clarify the relationship between *dharmakāya* and *rūpakāya*.³¹²

Reported to be one of Maitrīpa’s teachers at Vikramaśīla before he set out to approach Śavaripa for Mahāmudrā teachings, Ratnākaraśānti developed his own unique interpretations about Buddha-nature. In general, Ratnākaraśānti adopted a Vijñānavāda position, particularly that of Nirākāravāda; however, throughout his doctrinal works, he consistently insisted on the compatibility between Madhyamaka and Yogācāra. In one of his tantric treatises the *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*, Ratnākaraśānti maintains that

³¹⁰ See Kano 2016: 34–40. Both Mādhyamika and Yogācārin scholars showed ambivalent attitudes towards the Buddha-nature doctrine as to whether it was definitive or provisional. A general argument for its being provisional was that the Buddha-nature idea was intended for those who feared the notion of emptiness or non-Buddhists who wrongly held the *ātman* view.

³¹¹ See Kano 2016: 43–54.

³¹² See Kano 2016: 52–53.

sentient beings – fundamentally constituted of the mental continuum – are possessed of Buddha-nature, which – qualified by five *tathāgata* wisdoms – is completely pure in nature; one attains the five wisdoms or a *buddha*’s awakening through revealing this Buddha-nature by removing adventitious stains covering over it. At this point, it seems that Ratnākaraśānti accepts the basic principle of the Buddha-nature doctrine. However, in what immediately follows, he equates Buddha-nature with the “seed of a *bodhisattva*” (*byang chub sems dpa’i sa bon*).³¹³

The *Muktāvalī* – Ratnākaraśānti’s commentary on the *Hevajratantra* – also bears mention of *tathāgatagarbha*. The teacher takes a firmer position that “all *bodhisattvas* have Buddha-nature,” which implicitly denies the universality of Buddha-nature in all sentient beings. However, elsewhere in the same work, Ratnākaraśānti admits the standard Buddha-nature formula which separates external stains from innate purity. Possibly disclosing his subscription to the Vijñānavāda system, Ratnākaraśānti’s partial acceptance of Buddha-nature in terms of its scope of applicability reveals a reconciliatory effort to bring the Buddha-nature doctrine – which he considers to be connected with the Madhyamaka *ekayāna* model – into the Yogācāra fold of *gotrabheda* scheme.³¹⁴

No matter how Ratnākaraśānti perceives the doxographic position of Tathāgatagarbha *per se*, his interpretation of the Buddha-nature doctrine is essentially grounded in the tantric context of co-emergent joy (*sahajānanda*) experience. Ratnākaraśānti accounts for the soteriological significance of *sahajānanda* – the third one in the four-*ānanda* succession of the *sexual yoga* praxis described in the *Hevajratantra* –

³¹³ See the *GMUṬ* (ff. 80a6–b1); c.f. Kano 2016: 74–75, note 18.

³¹⁴ See Kano 2016: 75–77.

in the light of an innatist model driven by the presupposition that awakening itself is innate, not simply a potential for awakening.³¹⁵ According to the *Hevajrasahasadyoga* – another work of his *Hevajra* exposition – through the *sahajānanda* experience one catches an exemplary glimpse of what awakening is like, which is further identified with bare manifestation which is image-free (*nirābhāsaprakāśamātra*).³¹⁶ Such a phenomenological description corresponds to the *nirābhāsa*-based cognitive status of “seeing *mahāyāna*” as sketched in Ratnākaraśānti’s Mahāyāna fourfold meditative scheme. As such, combining both apophasis and cataphasis in describing the experiential domain of ultimate reality (bare manifestation which is image-free, or an image-free perception of *mahāyāna*), Ratnākaraśānti allows room for the Buddha-nature doctrine to unfold in his phenomenology and philosophy of the Buddhist soteriological path.

4.3. Concluding remarks

Schmithausen (1981) traces two opposed soteriological currents in Buddhism between “positive-mystical” and “negative-intellectualist” conceptions of liberation.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ See Tomlinson 2017: 363–364.

³¹⁶ See Tomlinson 2017: 367–368. For Ratnākaraśānti’s exposition of bare manifestation which is image-free, see the *MĀr* (12); c.f. Tomlinson 2017: 365, note 24. As Tomlinson (2017: 358) notes, “Ratnākaraśānti tries to evade the criticism that the unreality of mental content implies the unreality of consciousness itself. He does this by driving a wedge between the nature of consciousness and mental content: content is the sort of thing that might be experienced erroneously; consciousness itself, however, is directly known insofar as it is innately self-aware.” As such, the experience characteristic of the ultimate attainment is described by Ratnākaraśānti as “bare manifestaiton” (innately self-aware consciousness) which is free from *ābhāsa* (mental content).

³¹⁷ Schmithausen (1981) first uses this pair of terms to account for two antithetical Buddhist models of liberation. In a similar vein, Griffiths (1986) adopts the pair of “mystical-enstatic” and “intellectual-analytical.” Seyfort Ruegg (1989) frames under this unifying antithesis his discussion of Buddhist intellectual strands oriented towards different concerns. Following the

Derivative from this distinction are two entangled threads towards which Buddhist philosophical and meditative inquiries orient – that is, how reality can be described in phenomenological terms and in what way it can be approached. The Buddha-nature current which tends to describe Buddhahood in “positive” terms stands in contrast to the “negative” current characteristic of the “emptiness” doctrine. However, as we take a closer look at this “positive” current, it displays a certain degree of heterogeneity in terms of soteriological means. For instance, while Kamalaśīla advocated an analytical (i.e., intellectualist) path to Buddhahood, Maitrīpa (and also Ratnākaraśānti) inclined towards an intuitive or innatist (i.e., mystical) approach.

As such, Maitrīpa’s Mahāmudrā philosophy of Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka and *amanasikāra* constitute a “positive-mystical” paradigm of Buddhist soteriology, and its phenomenological focus on the mental luminosity (or “bare manifestation” in Ratnākaraśānti’s term) derives from its root in the tantric context. Later in Tibet, this philosophy articulated by Maitrīpa and his disciples – together with other “positive-mystical” philosophical strands – further informed the “Great Madhyamaka” (*dbu ma chen po*) which developed in parallel with Mahāmudrā and rDzogs-chen, and thus made a famous triad of “Three Greats” (*chen po gsum*).³¹⁸

Maitrīpa’s philosophical articulation as well as its tantric correlation served as a direct source of inspiration for the systematic and structured presentation of the

suite of these scholars, Wangchuk (2007: 38–9) borrows from Seyfort Ruegg’s “nature model” and “nurture model” and puts forward the pair of “revelation model” and “generation model.”

³¹⁸ In the 14th century, the term “Great Madhyamaka” became a self-identification for the gZhan-stong (extrinsic-emptiness) doctrine which was in opposition with Rang-stong (self-emptiness). Later it was commonly used to refer to schools oriented towards the Buddha-nature doctrine – namely Jo-nang, bKa’-brgyud and rNying-ma – in the non-sectarian (*ris med*) movement taking place from the 18th century. See Hookham 1992: 157–9.

Mahāmudrā architecture in the Tangut materials. The next chapter turns back to the *Keypoints-Notes* cluster. I will analyze these two Tangut Mahāmudrā works against the Indo-Tibetan topography of Buddhist Tantra and scholasticism I have outlined in the second and third chapters.

5. Chapter Four

The *Keypoints-Notes* cluster: A Tangut expression of the intellectual continuum

Overview

The four-century development of Mahāhmudrā – from its origination in Indian Buddhist Tantra through a formative process nourished by Indian and Tibetan post-tantric ethos – was epitomized in the 12th-century Tangut cluster made up of the *Keypoints* compiled by Dehui – a Xixia-based Buddhist scholar – from his Tibetan teacher bTson-'grus's lectures and its commentary *Notes* possibly composed by Dehui's circle if not directly by Dehui himself.³¹⁹

The *Keypoints* represents one of the first attempts at a Mahāhmudrā architecture which organizes Buddhist thoughts and practices in a progressive “path stage” (*lam rim*) structure. Initially a gnostic index of ultimacy derived from Buddhist Tantra, the term *mahāhmudrā* gradually rose to act as an overarching rubric beyond both sūtra and tantra. Although such a paradigm is traceable in both Indian and Tibetan works (e.g. Maitrīpa's and sGam-po-pa's) as early as the 11th century, the earliest instance of its systematic and structured presentation is found in the *Keypoints*, which dates to the mid-12th century. Furthermore, the *Notes* commentary on the *Keypoints*'s opening verses which describe Śākyamuni's teaching career takes the form of a fourfold exoteric doxography, which parallels the stage path as described in the *Keypoints*'s causal vehicle and allows deeper

³¹⁹ C.f. Chapter One (2.2. An overview of the Xixia Mahāhmudrā materials).

insights into the Tangut deployment of Mahāyāna scholastic sources into a doctrinal architecture to scaffold Mahāmudrā.

The *Keypoints* presents a twofold scheme of causal and resultant vehicles proceeding in parallel in the first seven stages and converging in the eighth and ninth stages. The causal vehicle (CV) schemes a traditional Mahāyāna doctrinal hierarchy of Hīnayāna (CV 1–3), Vijñānavāda (CV 4–5), Madhyamaka (CV 6–7), and Buddha-nature (CV 8–9). The resultant vehicle (RV) presents a complete practical package of Buddhist Tantra from the “generation phase” of *deity yoga* (RV 1–2), to the “perfection phase” of *body yoga* in which one goes through Psychic Heat (RV 3–4), Clear Light (RV 5), and Illusory Body (RV 6), and finally recedes to emptiness (RV 7). The last two resultant vehicle stages (RV 8–9) is considered to be identical with their causal vehicle counterparts. Unfortunately, the *Notes* commentaries on both vehicles are lost in the currently available Tangut manuscripts. However, its fourfold exoteric doxography – the progressive structure of which mirrors that of the *Keypoints*’s causal vehicle – provides us with extensive expositions of each doctrinal position (except the fourth one, the Buddha-nature) framed within sophisticated hermeneutical devices.

As such, a close reading of relevant verses and passages from the *Keypoints-Notes* cluster not only reveals the Tangut interpretive agency in mapping out the path of recognizing the nature of reality and the mind, it also unpacks in contextually nuanced ways the multi-layered and diversely constituted topography of Indian Buddhist Tantra and scholasticism.

5.1. An overview of the content and structure of the *Keypoints* and the *Notes*

Solonin (2011) provides a preliminary study of the *Keypoints* – on the basis of Tang.#inv. 345#2526 – in terms of its textual form, transmission lineage, formulaic framework for a philosophical narrative, and doctrinal connections with other Tangut Mahāmudrā texts. The work is especially distinctive in its systematic presentation of doctrines in a formulaic and orderly manner. It opens with a succession of nine versified biographies of lineage holders, among which those of the eight patriarchs’ follow the same structural formula in distinction from that of the initial one devoted to Śākyamuni as the originator of the tradition. The main body – informed by an overarching topic of non-conceptuality (無念 *无念, *nirvikalpa*) – consists of two major parts embedded within a dialogical format of the eighth patriarch brTson-’grus’s answers to his disciple Dehui’s questions.³²⁰ The first part concerns a twofold paradigm of causal and resultant (i.e., sūtric and tantric) vehicles, each progressing through nine stages (九品道). Both vehicles converge in the eighth stages of non-conceptuality and culminate in the ninth, the Mahāmudrā attainment. Each stage of both vehicles is defined in terms of metaphoric descriptions of disciples’ proclivities (根性 *根性) and correspondent path stages – whereby one advances from the preliminary level towards the ultimate status of

³²⁰ The answer-to-question (*zhus lan*) format, already seen adopted in the Indian Buddhist scriptures, had become an established literary genre in Tibetan literature by the 12th century. In particular, sGam-po-pa’s *Collected Works* contain four *zhus lan* texts which compile the teacher’s replies to the questions posed by his close disciples. Kragh (2015: 301) identifies two Indian prototypes for the *zhus lan* genre in the Tibetan bsTan-’gyur, the *Sa ra ha dang mai tri pa’i zhus le[a]n* (P 5048) and the *rDo rje sems dpa’i zhus lan* (P 5082). For a discussion on *zhus lan* in the context of Tibetan Treasure (*gter ma*) literature, see Liang (forthcoming).

Mahāmudrā. Presented below charts the proclivities and stages in Causal and Resultant Vehicles.³²¹

	Causal vehicle (繼乘 *因乘, <i>rgyu'i theg pa</i> ; “CV”)		Resultant vehicle (終乘 *果乘, <i>'bras bu'i theg pa</i> ; “RV”)	
	Proclivity	Path stage	Proclivity	Path stage
1	medicine tree (藥樹 *药树)	antidote to the karmic trio (散散對治 *对治三业)	iron (鐵礦 *矿铁)	contemplating the Buddha in front (前觀佛身 *前观佛身)
2	pure flower (淨華 *净华)	contemplating objective particle (觀境微塵 *观境微尘)	bronze (青銅 *青铜)	contemplating oneself as the Buddha (觀自身佛 *观自身佛)
3	retreat (入隱 *入隐)	contemplating subject as impermanent (觀識無常 *观识无常)	silver (白銀 *白银)	contemplating the other as the Buddha (觀他身佛 *观他身佛)
4	fragrant mountain (香山 *香山)	contemplating object as selfless (觀境無我 *观境无我)	gold (真金 *真金)	sensual bliss through psychic heat (拙火喜樂 *拙火喜乐)
5	pure moon (淨月 *净月)	contemplating physical body as selfless (觀身無我 *观身无我)	jade (明玉 *明玉)	lumimous bliss through seminal nuclei (明點明樂 *明点明乐)
6	glowing sun (明日 *明日)	contemplating consciousness as selfless (觀識無我 *观识无我)	glass (琉璃 *琉璃)	tranquil bliss through energy channel (<i>nja-dja</i> 脈輪寂樂 *脉轮寂乐)
7	ship (船舶 *船舶)	contemplating phenomena as empty (觀法真空 *观法真空)	adamant (金剛 *金刚)	empty bliss of ultimacy (究竟空樂 *究竟空乐)
8	great ocean (大海 *大海)	contemplating the origin as non-conceptual (觀源無念 *观源无念)	jewel (<i>mo-nji</i> 摩尼 *摩尼)	bliss of display through non-conceptuality (無念戲樂 *无念戏乐)

³²¹ See the *Keypoints* (inv. 2526: 5b5–7a8; inv. 824: 5a6–6b7); c.f. Solonin 2011: 289–292; Sun & Nie 2018: 302–306.

9	empty space (𪗇𪗇 *虚空)	liberation through non- recognition (𪗇𪗇𪗇𪗇 *无 知解脱)	mountain king (𪗇𪗇 *山王)	great bliss through non- recognition (𪗇𪗇𪗇𪗇 *无 知大乐)
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The proclivities such as medicine tree or pure flower the *Keypoints* assigns to each stage in both the causal and resultant vehicles strike one as an odd list of symbolic names, only a few of which evoke Buddhist imagery or theme (e.g. empty space, adamant, and jewel). Traceable to neither Tibetan nor Sinitic Buddhist literary traditions, this list is most likely an indigenous invention inspired by the Tangut understanding and imagination.

The *Keypoints*'s explications of each stage within the two vehicles follow the formula of two four-line verses – the first one articulating the philosophy or mechanism for the praxis laid out in the second – until the seventh stage of the resultant vehicle.³²² As for the eighth stage of the resultant vehicle – the “bliss of display through non-conceptuality” – the text states in the voice of brTson-'grus that it is identical in practice with its eighth-stage counterpart in the causal vehicle, “contemplating the origin as non-conceptual.” In reply to Dehui's further inquiry about why the names of the two eighth stages in the causal and resultant vehicles respectively differ from each other insofar as both stages allegedly share the same practice, brTson-'grus explains that it is only a matter of whether the practitioner disengages with (via the causal vehicle) or engages with (via the resultant vehicle) sensual desires (𪗇𪗇𪗇𪗇 *离合五欲) to accord himself with suchness (𪗇𪗇𪗇𪗇 *合一真), that is, non-conceptuality. The same rationale applies to

³²² See the *Keypoints* (inv. 2526: 7b1–15b3; inv. 824: 6b8–14a3); c.f. Sun & Nie 2018: 306–317.

the convergence of the two ninth stages in the causal and resultant vehicles respectively in terms of basic principle.³²³

The second part of the *Keypoints*'s main body concerns the eighth stage of non-conceptuality in both vehicles. Non-conceptuality is explicated through the three doors of philosophical view (ཡོང་ཆོས་ལྟོགས་ *知见宗趣, **lta ba khong chud*), practical path (སྒྲུབ་ལམ་ *修行道显, **sgom lam nges bstan*) and experiential realization (ཡོང་ཆོས་ལྟོགས་ *证如功起, **nyams rtogs mngon 'byung*), among which, unfortunately, only the first door discussion remains in the currently available recensions. The door of philosophical view consists of two parts, the *nyāya* door which refutes hundreds of faults (ཡོང་ཆོས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ *破斥百非正理门) and the *upadeśa* door which points out the suchness (ཡོང་ཆོས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ *明指一真师要门), from which only the latter is elaborated herein. The *upadeśa* door consists of four parts, the door of miraculous manifestation which demonstrates all phenomena to be illusory (ཡོང་ཆོས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ *诸相虚妄幻化门), the door of conceptual analysis which

³²³ See the *Keypoints* (RV 8a): ཡོང་ཆོས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་, ཡོང་ཆོས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་。。。ཡོང་ཆོས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་, ཡོང་ཆོས་ལྟོགས་ལྟོགས་ (彼乐信因乘者, 离五欲而和顺一真。。。此乐信果乘者, 合五欲而随顺一真; “those inclined towards the causal vehicles disengage themselves from the five sensual desires to accord with reality...these inclined towards the resultant vehicles engage themselves with the five sensual desires to accord with reality”); c.f. Sun & Nie 2018: 317–318. Whether or not one engages with sensual desires to accord himself with suchness had been well received throughout the *DYM* as an important parameter to distinguish between the sūtric and tantric paths. For instance, it is stated in the *Guangming ding xuanyi* 光明定玄义 (*GDX*) that “one who practices through abandoning *kleśa* practices the sūtric path, while one who practices without abandoning *kleśa* practices the tantric path” (若弃舍烦恼而修道者是显教道, 不舍烦恼而修道者是密教道); c.f. Shen 2017: 208. In terms of the Tibetan attitude towards the sūtra-tantra distinction, Germano & Waldron (2006: 51–2) observes “a general polarization into two broad trajectories: one which tended to keep these two discourse realms separate by treating tantra as innovative in ‘practice’ but consonant with traditional exoteric ‘view’; and one which tended to see these discourses as interpenetrating, and understood tantra to be profoundly philosophical and even superior to traditional exoteric intellectual discourses.” A religio-social parallel to this model is the distinction between the gSar-ma (modernist) and rNying-ma (traditionalist) persuasions; see Almogi 2009: 76–7, note 103.

demonstrates all thoughts to be illusory appearances (𣪗𣪗𣪗𣪗𣪗𣪗 *诸念幻相妄察
 𣪗), the door of non-conceptuality which demonstrates the illusory mind as ungrounded
 (𣪗𣪗𣪗𣪗𣪗𣪗 *妄心无本无念门) and the door of non-birth which demonstrates non-
 conceptuality as quiescent (𣪗𣪗𣪗𣪗𣪗𣪗 *无念寂寞无生门), each of which is
 accorded eight metaphors.³²⁴ Below is a topical outline of the *Keypoints*:

1. Transmission from Śākyamuni through the eight patriarchs in the form of biographical
 ode

1.1. Śākyamuni

1.2. Eight Patriarchs: Vimalakīrti, Saraha, Nāgārjuna, Śavaripa, Maitrīpa,
 Jñānakīrti, Vāgīśvara, brTson-'grus

2. The Mahāmudrā teachings taught by brTson-'grus to Dehui

2.1. General explanation

2.2. Causal and resultant vehicles

2.2.1. General explanation

2.2.1.1. Proclivity

³²⁴ See the *Keypoints* (inv. 2526: 16a8–27b8; inv. 824: 14b6–20a8); c.f. Sun & Nie 2018: 317–318. Under Tang. 345, the recension invs. 2526 ends in the middle of the third metaphor of the fourth door of non-birth, while inv. 824 lasts till the end of the sixth metaphor of the second door of conceptual analysis. The recension inv. 2876 complements the Tang. 345 recensions with more of the fourth door of non-birth through the seventh metaphor, which, however, does not complete itself; see the *Keypoints* (inv. 2876: 6b5–6, 8).

2.2.1.1.1. Proclivities of disciples corresponding to the nine causal vehicle stages

2.2.1.1.2. Proclivities of disciples corresponding to the nine resultant vehicle stages

2.2.1.2. Path stages

2.2.1.2.1. The nine causal vehicle stages

2.2.1.2.2. The nine resultant vehicle stages

2.2.2. Specific explanation

2.2.2.1. Nine causal vehicle stages

2.2.2.1.1. Antidote to the karmic trio

2.2.2.1.2. Contemplating objective particle

2.2.2.1.3. Contemplating subject as impermanent

2.2.2.1.4. Contemplating object as selfless

2.2.2.1.5. Contemplating physical body as selfless

2.2.2.1.6. Contemplating consciousness as selfless

2.2.2.1.7. Contemplating phenomena as empty

2.2.2.1.8. Contemplating the origin as non-conceptual

2.2.2.1.9. Liberation through non-recognition

2.2.2.2. Nine resultant vehicle stages

2.2.2.2.1. Contemplating the Buddha afront

- 2.2.2.2.2. Contemplating oneself as the Buddha
- 2.2.2.2.3. Contemplating the other as the Buddha
- 2.2.2.2.4. Sensual bliss through psychic heat
- 2.2.2.2.5. Luminous bliss through seminal nuclei
- 2.2.2.2.6. Tranquil bliss through energy channel
- 2.2.2.2.7. Empty bliss of ultimacy
- 2.2.2.2.8. Bliss of display through non-conceptuality
- 2.2.2.2.9. Great bliss through non-recognition

2.3. Path of non-conceptuality

2.3.1. General explanation of the path of non-conceptuality

2.3.2. Specific explanation of non-conceptuality in terms of philosophical view, practical path and experiential realization

2.3.2.1. The philosophical view of non-conceptuality

2.3.2.1.1. The *nyāya* door

2.3.2.1.2. The *upadeśa* door

2.3.2.1.2.1. The door of miraculous manifestation

2.3.2.1.2.2. The door of conceptual analysis

2.3.2.1.2.3. The door of non-conceptuality

2.3.2.1.2.4. The door of non-birth

2.3.2.2. The practical path of non-conceptuality

2.3.2.3. The experiential realization of non-conceptuality

The *Keypoints*'s commentary *Notes* exists in multiple volumes. The total volume number is so far unknown. The extant part of the *Notes* are its first, second and last volumes. I name the last volume as *Notes X* for reference. The *Notes I* is extant in invs. 2858, 7163 and 3817, the *Notes II* in inv. 3817 and the *Notes X* in inv. 2851. The *Notes I* starts with an explication of the title (窺窺 * 解题) “鞞鞞鞞鞞 * 大印究竟要集” through the unifying topic of non-conceptuality (惛惛 * 无念). Each character in the title is decoded into three topics, adding up to eighteen in total. Then the commentary turns to the biographies of lineage holders starting from Śākyamuni. The *Notes I* ends with the biography of the third patriarch Nāgārjuna. The *Notes II* continues to comment on the fourth patriarch Śavaripa's biography and ends with the fourth stage of the causal vehicle “contemplating the object as selfless” (觀觀 * 观境无我). The *Notes X* starts with an explication of the tranquil door of entering the *samādhi* (入入 * 入定道清静门), one of the four doors belonging to the practical door of non-conceptuality. As such, the second and third doors of non-conceptuality – i.e., those of the practical path and experiential realization – which are missing in the currently extant recensions of the *Keypoints* are partially recoverable through the *Notes X*. The *Notes X* also contains a colophon describing Dehui's experience of studying with his teacher brTson-'grus in

Tsongkha as well as the former's religious activities of building the monastery and teaching the Dharma.³²⁵

5.2. The Mahāmudrā philosophy and practice laid out in the *Keypoints* twofold scheme and the *Notes* doxography

The *Keypoints*'s twofold paradigm of sūtric and tantric paths proceeding in parallel towards the realization of reality follows a similar path structure as the threefold division into the sūtric, the tantric and the Mahāmudrā modes seen in both the *Uncommon* and sGam-po-pa's works (though with discursive variations). The Xixia work *Uncommon* – allegedly a Chinese translation of an Indian work attributed to Maitrīpa – introduces a threefold path structure, namely the provisional meaning of *pāramitā*, the definitive meaning of tantra, and the quintessential meaning of Mahāmudrā. As much as sGam-po-pa envisions a hierarchy of spiritual efficacy along which the three modes of teaching are situated,³²⁶ ultimately he parallels both the sūtric and tantric modes as different approaches to the same reality, and raises the Mahāmudrā mode – sometime identified with rDzogs-chen – above the previous two.³²⁷ Back to the doctrinal and

³²⁵ See the *Notes* X: 26a1–27b4; for an English translation of the paragraph, see Solonin 2012a: 245–246.

³²⁶ For instance, sGam-po-pa assigns each mode different attitudes towards *kleśa*, namely the *pāramitā* mode abandons *kleśa*, the secret *mantra* mode transforms *kleśa*, and the Mahāmudrā (or rDzogs-chen) mode recognizes *kleśa* as the basis of great gnosis; see the *Tshogs yon* (12a2–12b1): *lam rnam pa gsum yin gsung | de la rnam pa gsum ni | gzhi spong ba 'i lam ni nyon mongs pa spong bar 'dod | gnyen po ye shes rgyud la skye bar 'dod pa ni | pha rol tu phyin pa 'i gdams pa 'o || gzhi bsgyur ba ni gsang sngags te | ji ltar bsgyur na | phyi snod kyi 'jig rten gzhal yas khang du blta | nang bcud kyi sems can lha dang lha mor blta | bza' btung thams cad bdud rtsir blta | nyon mongs pa ye shes chen po 'i gzhir shes pa ni gsang sngags bla na med pa phyag rgya chen po 'i don dam | rdzogs pa chen po 'i don te*; c.f. Jackson 1994: 28.

³²⁷ C.f. Chapter One, notes 52 and 53.

practical architecture in the *Keypoints*, Mahāmudrā is embedded within the complex co-built by the sūtric and tantric paths and stands at the pinnacle where both paths converge. It seems that the Mahāmudrā mode – meant by sGam-po-pa as taking the direct perception (*mngon sum lam du byed pa*) for its path – corresponds to both vehicles’ eighth stages of non-conceptuality and ninth stages of non-cognition.

This section presents a detailed layout of the *Keypoints*’s presentation of the causal and resultant vehicles – along with a parallel exoteric path structure in the *Notes* doxography – and tackles the implications of the entire architecture for us understanding the intellectual history of Buddhist Tantra and Mahāyāna scholasticism.

5.2.1. Sūtric grounds and scholastic philosophy

The progressive structures as laid out respectively in the *Keypoints*’s version of the causal vehicle and the *Notes*’s doxography parallel each other. In what follows, I will first present details of these two schemes, and then analyze their relevance to the intellectual history of Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation.

5.2.1.1. The causal vehicle

The causal vehicle in the *Keypoints* starts with its first stage of “antidote to the karmic trio” by presenting basic Buddhist moral lessons which are grounded in a knowledge of karmic drives fueling saṃsāric processes (CV 1). Then, in the second and third stages, the path leads one to the philosophical/meditative curricula codified by Mahāyānists as belonging to the Hīnayānist tradition, namely contemplation on the

objective sphere (𑖠𑖩 *境, *viṣaya*) as broken into subatomic particles (𑖠𑖩𑖩 *微尘, *anu*) (CV 2) and on the conscious continuum (*cittasamtāna*) as impermanent (CV 3). The fourth and fifth stages on selflessness (𑖠𑖩𑖩 *无我, *anātman*) in objective sphere (CV 4) and in physical body (𑖠𑖩 *身, *rūpa-kāya*) (CV 5) respectively leads one to mentally withdraw from the objective world and abide in mind-only (*cittamātra*). Then in the sixth stage, one transcends the apprehension on consciousness and realizes its selflessness:

The generation of consciousness depending on objective sphere (𑖠𑖩𑖩𑖩𑖩 *依境起识), the consciousness arises and ceases in every single thought-moment.

One adhering to a self in consciousness, the characteristic of self continues through *samsāra*.

Conditioned by causality, consciousness is the correct conventional truth (𑖠𑖩𑖩𑖩 *真实世俗).

Baseless and rootless, object is the perverted conventional truth (𑖠𑖩𑖩𑖩 *颠倒世俗). (CV 6a)

As such,

If one contemplates on the consciousness via gnostic knowledge (𑖠𑖩 *智, *jñāna*), the manifestation of consciousness (𑖠𑖩𑖩 *识相, *viññānanālakṣaṇa*) is illusory.

If one examines the self via insight (𣎵* 慧, *prajñā*), the essence of self (𣎵* 我
体, *bdag gi ngo bo*) is deceptive.

Sustaining mindfulness (*smṛti*) in every thought-moment, the thinker is that of
whom the egoistic appearance (𣎵* 我相) is baseless.

Doing and acting, the actor is that of whom the essence of mind (𣎵* 心体, *sems
kyi ngo bo*) is rootless. (CV 6b)

However, consciousness in this stage is still considered as the correct conventional truth
(*tathya-saṃvṛti*, *yang dag pa'i kun rdzob*), in contrast with object which is taken as the
perverted conventional truth (*mithya-saṃvṛti*, *log pa'i kun rdzob*).

Now that the practitioner has transcended apprehensions on both object and
consciousness, he proceeds to the seventh stage of contemplating phenomena as empty:

Existence being empty, the non-duality (𣎵* 无二, *advaya*) of existence and
emptiness is marvelous existence (𣎵* 妙有).

Emptiness being existent, the non-differentiation of emptiness and existence is true
emptiness (𣎵* 真空).

The true emptiness tranquilizing, there is neither arising nor ceasing in one-taste
(*ekarasa*, *ro gcig pa*).

Marvelous existence illuminating, the variegated signs are miraculously
transformed like illusions. (CV 7a)

As such,

All signs being deceptive, one neither adheres to the sign-refuting (𣪠𣪠 *破相) notion (i.e., Madhyamaka) nor the signlessness (𣪠𣪠 *无相, *ānimitta*).

All thoughts being deluded, one neither engage with the elimination of thoughts nor thoughtlessness (𣪠𣪠 *无想, *asaṃjñā*).

Riding on the boat of insight, one travels across the ocean of four extremes (𣪠𣪠 *四边, *catuṣkoṭi*).

Holding the hook of compassion (𣪠𣪠 *慈悲, *karuṇā*), one saves the turtles and fishes of the three realms (𣪠𣪠 *三界, *traidhātuka*). (CV 7b)

Here true emptiness free from four extremes and the notion that existence and emptiness are non-dual reflect typical Madhyamaka formulations.

The eighth stage navigates one to the “origin,” which is considered as non-conceptual:

The true mind is tranquil and can not be moved by the four marks [of conditioned existence] (𣪠𣪠 *四相, *caturlakṣaṇa*).

The awakened nature (𣪠𣪠 *觉性) is luminous; how can three times (𣪠𣪠 *三世, *triṣkāla*) transform it?

Non-conceptuality (惛念 *无念, *nirvikalpa*) in every thought-moment is
awakening (繇教 *菩提, *bodhi*).

Conceptual agitation in every thought-moment is affliction (翳礙 *烦恼, *kleṣa*).

(CV 8a)

As such,

Every thought-moment being tranquil, the mind is marvelous and luminous.

The mind being marvelous, every thought-moment is empty and tranquil.

Being tranquil and marvelous, the marvelous nature returns to the root.

Being mindful in every thought-moment, the non-conceptual mind retreats to the
origin. (CV 8b)

The seventh-stage realization of true emptiness free from four extremes is now
transcended by a cataphasis described in vivid phenomenological terms, that is, a non-
conceptual status which is luminous and located in the “origin” or “root.”

The final ninth stage is the one whereby one attains complete liberation through
non-cognition of the non-conceptual realization:

As much as the conceptuality has ceased, the knowledge of non-conceptuality is
conceptuality.

As much as the cognition has ceased, the knowledge of non-cognition is cognition.

Abandoning the root on account of conceptuality, one is gradually diverted from truth and holds onto illusions (禿巖龍辯 *惑真執妄).

Forgetting the origin on account of cognition, one especially deviates from the awakening and engages the objective sphere (熾煖燄弱 *离觉和尘). (CV 9a)

As such,

The thought-moment being non-conceptual, non-conceptuality does not perceive non-conceptuality itself.

The mind being non-cognizing, non-cognition does not realize non-cognition itself.

Non-conceptuality is reality, whereas the knowledge of non-conceptuality is illusory.

Non-cognition is truth, whereas the knowledge of non-cognition is deluded. (CV 9b)

More of an extension of the eighth stage of non-conceptuality, the ninth stage emphasizes that even the slightest awareness of one's own non-conceptual status does not count as non-conceptuality, because "non-conceptuality does not perceive non-conceptuality itself," and "non-recognition does not realize non-recognition itself." In other words, only by completely eliminating the subject-object dichotomy does one achieve the final liberation.

To summarize, the nine causal stages map out a stage path whereby one (i.) cultivates virtues by abstaining from evil deeds (CV 1) and realizes the impermanence of

both the subject and object worlds by analyzing them into subatoms (CV 2) and the conscious continuum (CV 3) respectively; (ii.) realizes the external world – here represented by objective sphere (CV 4) and physical body (CV 5) – as selfless and withdraws to the mind-only status; (iii.) transcends the apprehension on consciousness (CV 6) and realizes true emptiness free from four extremes (CV 7); and finally (iv.) retreats to the origin characterized by non-conceptuality and luminosity (CV 8) and further eliminates the subject-object dichotomy by not even knowing “it is non-conceptual.”

5.2.1.2. The *Notes* doxography

Before consecutively presenting the biographies of eight patriarchs, the *Keypoints* opens with a versified account of Śākyamuni’s teaching career wherein he is shown teaching that “both object and consciousness exist” (𑖀𑖩𑖪𑖫𑖬 *境识二有), “both object and consciousness are empty” (𑖀𑖩𑖪𑖫𑖬 *境识双空), “object dissolves and consciousness remains” (𑖀𑖩𑖪𑖫𑖬 *境泯识留), and “one returns to the source [of the mind]” (𑖀𑖩𑖪𑖫𑖬 *归本还源):³²⁸

The root teacher Śākyamuni (1) illuminated the world of the five-evil eon, dispelling the darkness of six *gatis*; (2) purified those possessed of

³²⁸ *Keypoints* (A: 1a1–6; B: 1a1–6): 𑖀𑖩𑖪𑖫𑖬𑖭𑖮𑖯𑖰𑖱𑖲𑖳𑖴𑖵𑖶𑖷𑖸𑖹𑖺𑖻𑖼𑖽𑖾𑗀𑖿𑗁𑗂𑗃𑗄𑗅𑗆𑗇𑗈𑗉𑗊𑗋𑗌𑗍𑗎𑗏𑗐𑗑𑗒𑗓𑗔𑗕𑗖𑗗𑗘𑗙𑗚𑗛𑗜𑗝𑗞𑗟𑗠𑗡𑗢𑗣𑗤𑗥𑗦𑗧𑗨𑗩𑗪𑗫𑗬𑗭𑗮𑗯𑗰𑗱𑗲𑗳𑗴𑗵𑗶𑗷𑗸𑗹𑗺𑗻𑗼𑗽𑗾𑗿𑘀𑘁𑘂𑘃𑘄𑘅𑘆𑘇𑘈𑘉𑘊𑘋𑘌𑘍𑘎𑘏𑘐𑘑𑘒𑘓𑘔𑘕𑘖𑘗𑘘𑘙𑘚𑘛𑘜𑘝𑘞𑘟𑘠𑘡𑘢𑘣𑘤𑘥𑘦𑘧𑘨𑘩𑘪𑘫𑘬𑘭𑘮𑘯𑘰𑘱𑘲𑘳𑘴𑘵𑘶𑘷𑘸𑘹𑘺𑘻𑘼𑘽𑘾𑘿𑙀𑙁𑙂𑙃𑙄𑙅𑙆𑙇𑙈𑙉𑙊𑙋𑙌𑙍𑙎𑙏𑙐𑙑𑙒𑙓𑙔𑙕𑙖𑙗𑙘𑙙𑙚𑙛𑙜𑙝𑙞𑙟𑙠𑙡𑙢𑙣𑙤𑙥𑙦𑙧𑙨𑙩𑙪𑙫𑙬𑙭𑙮𑙯𑙰𑙱𑙲𑙳𑙴𑙵𑙶𑙷𑙸𑙹𑙺𑙻𑙼𑙽𑙾𑙿𑚀𑚁𑚂𑚃𑚄𑚅𑚆𑚇𑚈𑚉𑚊𑚋𑚌𑚍𑚎𑚏𑚐𑚑𑚒𑚓𑚔𑚕𑚖𑚗𑚘𑚙𑚚𑚛𑚜𑚝𑚞𑚟𑚠𑚡𑚢𑚣𑚤𑚥𑚦𑚧𑚨𑚩𑚪𑚫𑚬𑚭𑚮𑚯𑚰𑚱𑚲𑚳𑚴𑚵𑚷𑚶𑚸𑚹𑚺𑚻𑚼𑚽𑚾𑚿𑛀𑛁𑛂𑛃𑛄𑛅𑛆𑛇𑛈𑛉𑛊𑛋𑛌𑛍𑛎𑛏𑛐𑛑𑛒𑛓𑛔𑛕𑛖𑛗𑛘𑛙𑛚𑛛𑛜𑛝𑛞𑛟𑛠𑛡𑛢𑛣𑛤𑛥𑛦𑛧𑛨𑛩𑛪𑛫𑛬𑛭𑛮𑛯𑛰𑛱𑛲𑛳𑛴𑛵𑛶𑛷𑛸𑛹𑛺𑛻𑛼𑛽𑛾𑛿𑜀𑜁𑜂𑜃𑜄𑜅𑜆𑜇𑜈𑜉𑜊𑜋𑜌𑜍𑜎𑜏𑜐𑜑𑜒𑜓𑜔𑜕𑜖𑜗𑜘𑜙𑜚𑜛𑜜𑜝𑜞𑜟𑜠𑜡𑜢𑜣𑜤𑜥𑜦𑜧𑜨𑜩𑜪𑜫𑜬𑜭𑜮𑜯𑜰𑜱𑜲𑜳𑜴𑜵𑜶𑜷𑜸𑜹𑜺𑜻𑜼𑜽𑜾𑜿𑝀𑝁𑝂𑝃𑝄𑝅𑝆𑝇𑝈𑝉𑝊𑝋𑝌𑝍𑝎𑝏𑝐𑝑𑝒𑝓𑝔𑝕𑝖𑝗𑝘𑝙𑝚𑝛𑝜𑝝𑝞𑝟𑝠𑝡𑝢𑝣𑝤𑝥𑝦𑝧𑝨𑝩𑝪𑝫𑝬𑝭𑝮𑝯𑝰𑝱𑝲𑝳𑝴𑝵𑝶𑝷𑝸𑝹𑝺𑝻𑝼𑝽𑝾𑝿𑞀𑞁𑞂𑞃𑞄𑞅𑞆𑞇𑞈𑞉𑞊𑞋𑞌𑞍𑞎𑞏𑞐𑞑𑞒𑞓𑞔𑞕𑞖𑞗𑞘𑞙𑞚𑞛𑞜𑞝𑞞𑞟𑞠𑞡𑞢𑞣𑞤𑞥𑞦𑞧𑞨𑞩𑞪𑞫𑞬𑞭𑞮𑞯𑞰𑞱𑞲𑞳𑞴𑞵𑞶𑞷𑞸𑞹𑞺𑞻𑞼𑞽𑞾𑞿𑟀𑟁𑟂𑟃𑟄𑟅𑟆𑟇𑟈𑟉𑟊𑟋𑟌𑟍𑟎𑟏𑟐𑟑𑟒𑟓𑟔𑟕𑟖𑟗𑟘𑟙𑟚𑟛𑟜𑟝𑟞𑟟𑟠𑟡𑟢𑟣𑟤𑟥𑟦𑟧𑟨𑟩𑟪𑟫𑟬𑟭𑟮𑟯𑟰𑟱𑟲𑟳𑟴𑟵𑟶𑟷𑟸𑟹𑟺𑟻𑟼𑟽𑟾𑟿𑠀𑠁𑠂𑠃𑠄𑠅𑠆𑠇𑠈𑠉𑠊𑠋𑠌𑠍𑠎𑠏𑠐𑠑𑠒𑠓𑠔𑠕𑠖𑠗𑠘𑠙𑠚𑠛𑠜𑠝𑠞𑠟𑠠𑠡𑠢𑠣𑠤𑠥𑠦𑠧𑠨𑠩𑠪𑠫𑠬𑠭𑠮𑠯𑠰𑠱𑠲𑠳𑠴𑠵𑠶𑠷𑠸𑠺𑠹𑠻𑠼𑠽𑠾𑠿𑡀𑡁𑡂𑡃𑡄𑡅𑡆𑡇𑡈𑡉𑡊𑡋𑡌𑡍𑡎𑡏𑡐𑡑𑡒𑡓𑡔𑡕𑡖𑡗𑡘𑡙𑡚𑡛𑡜𑡝𑡞𑡟𑡠𑡡𑡢𑡣𑡤𑡥𑡦𑡧𑡨𑡩𑡪𑡫𑡬𑡭𑡮𑡯𑡰𑡱𑡲𑡳𑡴𑡵𑡶𑡷𑡸𑡹𑡺𑡻𑡼𑡽𑡾𑡿𑢀𑢁𑢂𑢃𑢄𑢅𑢆𑢇𑢈𑢉𑢊𑢋𑢌𑢍𑢎𑢏𑢐𑢑𑢒𑢓𑢔𑢕𑢖𑢗𑢘𑢙𑢚𑢛𑢜𑢝𑢞𑢟𑢠𑢡𑢢𑢣𑢤𑢥𑢦𑢧𑢨𑢩𑢪𑢫𑢬𑢭𑢮𑢯𑢰𑢱𑢲𑢳𑢴𑢵𑢶𑢷𑢸𑢹𑢺𑢻𑢼𑢽𑢾𑢿𑣀𑣁𑣂𑣃𑣄𑣅𑣆𑣇𑣈𑣉𑣊𑣋𑣌𑣍𑣎𑣏𑣐𑣑𑣒𑣓𑣔𑣕𑣖𑣗𑣘𑣙𑣚𑣛𑣜𑣝𑣞𑣟𑣠𑣡𑣢𑣣𑣤𑣥𑣦𑣧𑣨𑣩𑣪𑣫𑣬𑣭𑣮𑣯𑣰𑣱𑣲𑣳𑣴𑣵𑣶𑣷𑣸𑣹𑣺𑣻𑣼𑣽𑣾𑣿𑤀𑤁𑤂𑤃𑤄𑤅𑤆𑤇𑤈𑤉𑤊𑤋𑤌𑤍𑤎𑤏𑤐𑤑𑤒𑤓𑤔𑤕𑤖𑤗𑤘𑤙𑤚𑤛𑤜𑤝𑤞𑤟𑤠𑤡𑤢𑤣𑤤𑤥𑤦𑤧𑤨𑤩𑤪𑤫𑤬𑤭𑤮𑤯𑤰𑤱𑤲𑤳𑤴𑤵𑤶𑤷𑤸𑤹𑤺𑤻𑤼𑤽𑤾𑤿𑥀𑥁𑥂𑥃𑥄𑥅𑥆𑥇𑥈𑥉𑥊𑥋𑥌𑥍𑥎𑥏𑥐𑥑𑥒𑥓𑥔𑥕𑥖𑥗𑥘𑥙𑥚𑥛𑥜𑥝𑥞𑥟𑥠𑥡𑥢𑥣𑥤𑥥𑥦𑥧𑥨𑥩𑥪𑥫𑥬𑥭𑥮𑥯𑥰𑥱𑥲𑥳𑥴𑥵𑥶𑥷𑥸𑥹𑥺𑥻𑥼𑥽𑥾𑥿𑦀𑦁𑦂𑦃𑦄𑦅𑦆𑦇𑦈𑦉𑦊𑦋𑦌𑦍𑦎𑦏𑦐𑦑𑦒𑦓𑦔𑦕𑦖𑦗𑦘𑦙𑦚𑦛𑦜𑦝𑦞𑦟𑦠𑦡𑦢𑦣𑦤𑦥𑦦𑦧𑦨𑦩𑦪𑦫𑦬𑦭𑦮𑦯𑦰𑦱𑦲𑦳𑦴𑦵𑦶𑦷𑦸𑦹𑦺𑦻𑦼𑦽𑦾𑦿𑧀𑧁𑧂𑧃𑧄𑧅𑧆𑧇𑧈𑧉𑧊𑧋𑧌𑧍𑧎𑧏𑧐𑧑𑧒𑧓𑧔𑧕𑧖𑧗𑧘𑧙𑧚𑧛𑧜𑧝𑧞𑧟𑧠𑧡𑧢𑧣𑧤𑧥𑧦𑧧𑧨𑧩𑧪𑧫𑧬𑧭𑧮𑧯𑧰𑧱𑧲𑧳𑧴𑧵𑧶𑧷𑧸𑧹𑧺𑧻𑧼𑧽𑧾𑧿𑨀𑨁𑨂𑨃𑨄𑨅𑨆𑨇𑨈𑨉𑨊𑨋𑨌𑨍𑨎𑨏𑨐𑨑𑨒𑨓𑨔𑨕𑨖𑨗𑨘𑨙𑨚𑨛𑨜𑨝𑨞𑨟𑨠𑨡𑨢𑨣𑨤𑨥𑨦𑨧𑨨𑨩𑨪𑨫𑨬𑨭𑨮𑨯𑨰𑨱𑨲𑨳𑨴𑨵𑨶𑨷𑨸𑨹𑨺𑨻𑨼𑨽𑨾𑨿𑩀𑩁𑩂𑩃𑩄𑩅𑩆𑩇𑩈𑩉𑩊𑩋𑩌𑩍𑩎𑩏𑩐𑩑𑩒𑩓𑩔𑩕𑩖𑩗𑩘𑩙𑩚𑩛𑩜𑩝𑩞𑩟𑩠𑩡𑩢𑩣𑩤𑩥𑩦𑩧𑩨𑩩𑩪𑩫𑩬𑩭𑩮𑩯𑩰𑩱𑩲𑩳𑩴𑩵𑩶𑩷𑩸𑩹𑩺𑩻𑩼𑩽𑩾𑩿𑪀𑪁𑪂𑪃𑪄𑪅𑪆𑪇𑪈𑪉𑪊𑪋𑪌𑪍𑪎𑪏𑪐𑪑𑪒𑪓𑪔𑪕𑪖𑪗𑪘𑪙𑪚𑪛𑪜𑪝𑪞𑪟𑪠𑪡𑪢𑪣𑪤𑪥𑪦𑪧𑪨𑪩𑪪𑪫𑪬𑪭𑪮𑪯𑪰𑪱𑪲𑪳𑪴𑪵𑪶𑪷𑪸𑪹𑪺𑪻𑪼𑪽𑪾𑪿𑫀𑫁𑫂𑫃𑫄𑫅𑫆𑫇𑫈𑫉𑫊𑫋𑫌𑫍𑫎𑫏𑫐𑫑𑫒𑫓𑫔𑫕𑫖𑫗𑫘𑫙𑫚𑫛𑫜𑫝𑫞𑫟𑫠𑫡𑫢𑫣𑫤𑫥𑫦𑫧𑫨𑫩𑫪𑫫𑫬𑫭𑫮𑫯𑫰𑫱𑫲𑫳𑫴𑫵𑫶𑫷𑫸𑫹𑫺𑫻𑫼𑫽𑫾𑫿𑬀𑬁𑬂𑬃𑬄𑬅𑬆𑬇𑬈𑬉𑬊𑬋𑬌𑬍𑬎𑬏𑬐𑬑𑬒𑬓𑬔𑬕𑬖𑬗𑬘𑬙𑬚𑬛𑬜𑬝𑬞𑬟𑬠𑬡𑬢𑬣𑬤𑬥𑬦𑬧𑬨𑬩𑬪𑬫𑬬𑬭𑬮𑬯𑬰𑬱𑬲𑬳𑬴𑬵𑬶𑬷𑬸𑬹𑬺𑬻𑬼𑬽𑬾𑬿𑭀𑭁𑭂𑭃𑭄𑭅𑭆𑭇𑭈𑭉𑭊𑭋𑭌𑭍𑭎𑭏𑭐𑭑𑭒𑭓𑭔𑭕𑭖𑭗𑭘𑭙𑭚𑭛𑭜𑭝𑭞𑭟𑭠𑭡𑭢𑭣𑭤𑭥𑭦𑭧𑭨𑭩𑭪𑭫𑭬𑭭𑭮𑭯𑭰𑭱𑭲𑭳𑭴𑭵𑭶𑭷𑭸𑭹𑭺𑭻𑭼𑭽𑭾𑭿𑮀𑮁𑮂𑮃𑮄𑮅𑮆𑮇𑮈𑮉𑮊𑮋𑮌𑮍𑮎𑮏𑮐𑮑𑮒𑮓𑮔𑮕𑮖𑮗𑮘𑮙𑮚𑮛𑮜𑮝𑮞𑮟𑮠𑮡𑮢𑮣𑮤𑮥𑮦𑮧𑮨𑮩𑮪𑮫𑮬𑮭𑮮𑮯𑮰𑮱𑮲𑮳𑮴𑮵𑮶𑮷𑮸𑮹𑮺𑮻𑮼𑮽𑮾𑮿𑯀𑯁𑯂𑯃𑯄𑯅𑯆𑯇𑯈𑯉𑯊𑯋𑯌𑯍𑯎𑯏𑯐𑯑𑯒𑯓𑯔𑯕𑯖𑯗𑯘𑯙𑯚𑯛𑯜𑯝𑯞𑯟𑯠𑯡𑯢𑯣𑯤𑯥𑯦𑯧𑯨𑯩𑯪𑯫𑯬𑯭𑯮𑯯𑯰𑯱𑯲𑯳𑯴𑯵𑯶𑯷𑯸𑯹𑯺𑯻𑯼𑯽𑯾𑯿𑰀𑰁𑰂𑰃𑰄𑰅𑰆𑰇𑰈𑰉𑰊𑰋𑰌𑰍𑰎𑰏𑰐𑰑𑰒𑰓𑰔𑰕𑰖𑰗𑰘𑰙𑰚𑰛𑰜𑰝𑰞𑰟𑰠𑰡𑰢𑰣𑰤𑰥𑰦𑰧𑰨𑰩𑰪𑰫𑰬𑰭𑰮𑰯𑰰𑰱𑰲𑰳𑰴𑰵𑰶𑰷𑰸𑰹𑰺𑰻𑰼𑰽𑰾𑰿𑱀𑱁𑱂𑱃𑱄𑱅𑱆𑱇𑱈𑱉𑱊𑱋𑱌𑱍𑱎𑱏𑱐𑱑𑱒𑱓𑱔𑱕𑱖𑱗𑱘𑱙𑱚𑱛𑱜𑱝𑱞𑱟𑱠𑱡𑱢𑱣𑱤𑱥𑱦𑱧𑱨𑱩𑱪𑱫𑱬𑱭𑱮𑱯𑱰𑱱𑱲𑱳𑱴𑱵𑱶𑱷𑱸𑱹𑱺𑱻𑱼𑱽𑱾𑱿𑲀𑲁𑲂𑲃𑲄𑲅𑲆𑲇𑲈𑲉𑲊𑲋𑲌𑲍𑲎𑲏𑲐𑲑𑲒𑲓𑲔𑲕𑲖𑲗𑲘𑲙𑲚𑲛𑲜𑲝𑲞𑲟𑲠𑲡𑲢𑲣𑲤𑲥𑲦𑲧𑲨𑲩𑲪𑲫𑲬𑲭𑲮𑲯𑲰𑲱𑲲𑲳𑲴𑲵𑲶𑲷𑲸𑲹𑲺𑲻𑲼𑲽𑲾𑲿𑳀𑳁𑳂𑳃𑳄𑳅𑳆𑳇𑳈𑳉𑳊𑳋𑳌𑳍𑳎𑳏𑳐𑳑𑳒𑳓𑳔𑳕𑳖𑳗𑳘𑳙𑳚𑳛𑳜𑳝𑳞𑳟𑳠𑳡𑳢𑳣𑳤𑳥𑳦𑳧𑳨𑳩𑳪𑳫𑳬𑳭𑳮𑳯𑳰𑳱𑳲𑳳𑳴𑳵𑳶𑳷𑳸𑳹𑳺𑳻𑳼𑳽𑳾𑳿𑴀𑴁𑴂𑴃𑴄𑴅𑴆𑴇𑴈𑴉𑴊𑴋𑴌𑴍𑴎𑴏𑴐𑴑𑴒𑴓𑴔𑴕𑴖𑴗𑴘𑴙𑴚𑴛𑴜𑴝𑴞𑴟𑴠𑴡𑴢𑴣𑴤𑴥𑴦𑴧𑴨𑴩𑴪𑴫𑴬𑴭𑴮𑴯𑴰𑴱𑴲𑴳𑴴𑴵𑴶𑴷𑴸𑴹𑴺𑴻𑴼𑴽𑴾𑴿𑵀𑵁𑵂𑵃𑵄𑵅𑵆𑵇𑵈𑵉𑵊𑵋𑵌𑵍𑵎𑵏𑵐𑵑𑵒𑵓𑵔𑵕𑵖𑵗𑵘𑵙𑵚𑵛𑵜𑵝𑵞𑵟𑵠𑵡𑵢𑵣𑵤𑵥𑵦𑵧𑵨𑵩𑵪𑵫𑵬𑵭𑵮𑵯𑵰𑵱𑵲𑵳𑵴𑵵𑵶𑵷𑵸𑵹𑵺𑵻𑵼𑵽𑵾𑵿𑶀𑶁𑶂𑶃𑶄𑶅𑶆𑶇𑶈𑶉𑶊𑶋𑶌𑶍𑶎𑶏𑶐𑶑𑶒𑶓𑶔𑶕𑶖𑶗𑶘𑶙𑶚𑶛𑶜𑶝𑶞𑶟𑶠𑶡𑶢𑶣𑶤𑶥𑶦𑶧𑶨𑶩𑶪𑶫𑶬𑶭𑶮𑶯𑶰𑶱𑶲𑶳𑶴𑶵𑶶𑶷𑶸𑶹𑶺𑶻𑶼𑶽𑶾𑶿𑷀𑷁𑷂𑷃𑷄𑷅𑷆𑷇𑷈𑷉𑷊𑷋𑷌𑷍𑷎𑷏𑷐𑷑𑷒𑷓𑷔𑷕𑷖𑷗𑷘𑷙𑷚𑷛𑷜𑷝𑷞𑷟𑷠𑷡𑷢𑷣𑷤𑷥𑷦𑷧𑷨𑷩𑷪𑷫𑷬𑷭𑷮𑷯𑷰𑷱𑷲𑷳𑷴𑷵𑷶𑷷𑷸𑷹𑷺𑷻𑷼𑷽𑷾𑷿𑸀𑸁𑸂𑸃𑸄𑸅𑸆𑸇𑸈𑸉𑸊𑸋𑸌𑸍𑸎𑸏𑸐𑸑𑸒𑸓𑸔𑸕𑸖𑸗𑸘𑸙𑸚𑸛𑸜𑸝𑸞𑸟𑸠𑸡𑸢𑸣𑸤𑸥𑸦𑸧𑸨𑸩𑸪𑸫𑸬𑸭𑸮𑸯𑸰𑸱𑸲𑸳𑸴𑸵𑸶𑸷𑸸𑸹𑸺𑸻𑸼𑸽𑸾𑸿𑹀𑹁𑹂𑹃𑹄𑹅𑹆𑹇𑹈𑹉𑹊𑹋𑹌𑹍𑹎𑹏𑹐𑹑𑹒𑹓𑹔𑹕𑹖𑹗𑹘𑹙𑹚𑹛𑹜𑹝𑹞𑹟𑹠𑹡𑹢𑹣𑹤𑹥𑹦𑹧𑹨𑹩𑹪𑹫𑹬𑹭𑹮𑹯𑹰𑹱𑹲𑹳𑹴𑹵𑹶𑹷𑹸𑹹𑹺𑹻𑹼𑹽𑹾𑹿𑺀𑺁𑺂𑺃𑺄𑺅𑺆𑺇𑺈𑺉𑺊𑺋𑺌𑺍𑺎𑺏𑺐𑺑𑺒𑺓𑺔𑺕𑺖𑺗𑺘𑺙𑺚𑺛𑺜𑺝𑺞𑺟𑺠𑺡𑺢𑺣𑺤𑺥𑺦𑺧𑺨𑺩𑺪𑺫𑺬𑺭𑺮𑺯𑺰𑺱𑺲𑺳𑺴𑺵𑺶𑺷𑺸𑺹𑺺𑺻𑺼𑺽𑺾𑺿𑻀𑻁𑻂𑻃𑻄𑻅𑻆𑻇𑻈𑻉𑻊𑻋𑻌𑻍𑻎𑻏𑻐𑻑𑻒𑻓𑻔𑻕𑻖𑻗𑻘𑻙𑻚𑻛𑻜𑻝𑻞𑻟𑻠𑻡𑻢𑻣𑻤𑻥𑻦𑻧𑻨𑻩𑻪𑻫𑻬𑻭𑻮𑻯𑻰𑻱𑻲𑻳𑻴𑻵𑻶𑻷𑻸𑻹𑻺𑻻𑻼𑻽𑻾𑻿𑼀𑼁𑼂𑼃𑼄𑼅𑼆𑼇𑼈𑼉𑼊𑼋𑼌𑼍𑼎𑼏𑼐𑼑𑼒𑼓𑼔𑼕𑼖𑼗𑼘𑼙𑼚𑼛𑼜𑼝𑼞𑼟𑼠𑼡𑼢𑼣𑼤𑼥𑼦𑼧𑼨𑼩𑼪𑼫𑼬𑼭𑼮𑼯𑼰𑼱𑼲𑼳𑼴𑼵𑼶𑼷𑼸𑼹𑼺𑼻𑼼𑼽𑼾𑼿𑽀𑽁𑽂𑽃𑽄𑽅𑽆𑽇𑽈𑽉𑽊𑽋𑽌𑽍𑽎𑽏𑽐𑽑𑽒𑽓𑽔𑽕𑽖𑽗𑽘𑽙𑽚𑽛𑽜𑽝𑽞𑽟𑽠𑽡𑽢𑽣𑽤𑽥𑽦𑽧𑽨𑽩𑽪𑽫𑽬𑽭𑽮𑽯𑽰𑽱𑽲𑽳𑽴𑽵𑽶𑽷𑽸𑽹𑽺𑽻𑽼𑽽𑽾𑽿𑾀𑾁𑾂𑾃𑾄𑾅𑾆𑾇𑾈𑾉𑾊𑾋𑾌𑾍𑾎𑾏𑾐𑾑𑾒𑾓𑾔𑾕𑾖𑾗𑾘𑾙𑾚𑾛𑾜𑾝𑾞𑾟𑾠𑾡𑾢𑾣𑾤𑾥𑾦𑾧𑾨𑾩𑾪𑾫𑾬𑾭𑾮𑾯𑾰𑾱𑾲𑾳𑾴𑾵𑾶𑾷𑾸𑾹𑾺𑾻𑾼𑾽𑾾𑾿𑿀𑿁𑿂𑿃𑿄𑿅𑿆𑿇𑿈𑿉𑿊𑿋𑿌𑿍𑿎𑿏𑿐𑿑𑿒𑿓𑿔𑿕𑿖𑿗𑿘𑿙𑿚𑿛𑿜𑿝𑿞𑿟𑿠𑿡𑿢𑿣𑿤𑿥𑿦𑿧𑿨𑿩𑿪𑿫𑿬𑿭𑿮𑿯𑿰𑿱𑿲𑿳𑿴𑿵𑿶𑿷𑿸𑿹𑿺𑿻𑿼𑿽𑿾𑿿𑀀𑀁𑀂𑀃𑀄𑀅𑀆𑀇𑀈𑀉𑀊𑀋𑀌𑀍𑀎𑀏𑀐𑀑𑀒𑀓𑀔𑀕𑀖𑀗𑀘𑀙𑀚𑀛𑀜𑀝𑀞𑀟𑀠𑀡𑀢𑀣𑀤𑀥𑀦𑀧𑀨𑀩𑀪𑀫𑀬𑀭𑀮𑀯𑀰𑀱𑀲𑀳𑀴𑀵𑀶𑀷𑀸𑀹𑀺𑀻𑀼𑀽𑀾𑀿𑁀𑁁𑁂𑁃𑁄𑁅𑁆𑁇𑁈𑁉𑁊𑁋𑁌𑁍𑁎𑁏𑁐𑁑𑁒𑁓𑁔𑁕𑁖𑁗𑁘𑁙𑁚𑁛𑁜𑁝𑁞𑁟𑁠𑁡𑁢𑁣𑁤𑁥𑁦𑁧𑁨𑁩𑁪𑁫𑁬𑁭𑁮𑁯𑁰𑁱𑁲𑁳𑁴𑁵𑁶𑁷𑁸𑁹𑁺𑁻𑁼𑁽𑁾𑁿𑂀𑂁𑂂𑂃𑂄𑂅𑂆𑂇𑂈𑂉𑂊𑂋𑂌𑂍𑂎𑂏𑂐𑂑𑂒𑂓𑂔𑂕𑂖𑂗𑂘𑂙𑂚𑂛𑂜𑂝𑂞𑂟𑂠𑂡𑂢𑂣𑂤𑂥𑂦𑂧𑂨𑂩𑂪𑂫𑂬𑂭𑂮𑂯𑂰𑂱𑂲𑂳𑂴𑂵𑂶𑂷𑂸𑂺𑂹𑂻𑂼𑂽𑂾𑂿𑃀𑃁𑃂𑃃𑃄𑃅𑃆𑃇𑃈𑃉𑃊𑃋𑃌𑃍𑃎𑃏𑃐𑃑𑃒𑃓𑃔𑃕𑃖𑃗𑃘𑃙𑃚𑃛𑃜𑃝𑃞𑃟𑃠𑃡𑃢𑃣𑃤𑃥𑃦𑃧𑃨𑃩𑃪𑃫𑃬𑃭𑃮𑃯𑃰𑃱𑃲𑃳𑃴𑃵𑃶𑃷𑃸𑃹𑃺𑃻𑃼𑃽𑃾𑃿𑄀𑄁𑄂𑄃𑄄𑄅𑄆𑄇𑄈𑄉𑄊𑄋𑄌𑄍𑄎𑄏𑄐𑄑𑄒𑄓𑄔𑄕𑄖𑄗𑄘𑄙𑄚𑄛𑄜𑄝𑄞𑄟𑄠𑄡𑄢𑄣

three poisons, filling [the world] with the perfumed water of eight qualities; (3) taught the Dharma according to his disciples' capacities, in full accord with the way of the three capacities; and (4) demonstrated reality through the mind, sealing his single mind with non-conceptuality.

As such, he explained that both object and consciousness exist, then uttered that both are empty, elucidated that object dissolves and consciousness remains, and concluded by pointing to the moment when one returns to the source [of the mind].

In his great *samādhi*, he passed on this quintessential teaching (*upadeśa*) to the Great Being Vimalakīrti.

The *Notes* commentary on this paragraph takes the form of a doxography based on the doctrinal hierarchy of these four teachings, with the order of the second and third teachings reversed.³²⁹

Right after commenting on the first teaching that “both object and consciousness exist,” the *Notes* devotes a considerable amount of lines to explaining why it reverses the order of the second and third teachings in the *Keypoints*. As reasoned by the *Notes*, the Buddha has taught “object and consciousness are empty” in order to counter the substantialist adherence to both object and consciousness (訶騰報紙登龍戮華 *执境识为实有), an ill-conceived position potentially argued by disciples leaning on his first teaching that “both object and consciousness exist.” As “object and consciousness are empty” would again lead to an attachment to emptiness, the notion that “consciousness is

³²⁹ See the *Notes* I (A: 8b2–12b5; B: 12a4–19a1), Appendix I.

real” (𣪗𣪗登𣪗 *识者实有) is used in the formulation “object dissolves and consciousness remains” to counter that fallacy. Moreover, according to the Indian tradition of canonical hierarchy, both “object and consciousness exist” and “object dissolves and consciousness remains” are provisional teachings (𣪗𣪗 *权法), whereas “object and consciousness are empty” is the root which counts as Madhyamaka established through valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*). As such, “object and consciousness are empty” is explicated right after “object dissolves and consciousness remains.”³³⁰

Therefore, the *Notes* presents the order – allegedly in accordance with disciples’ spiritual hierarchy – as follows: “both object and consciousness exist,” “object dissolves and consciousness remains,” “both object and consciousness are empty,” and “one returns to the source [of the mind].” The first three teachings subscribe respectively to the Hīnayāna (𣪗𣪗 *小乘), Vijñānavāda (𣪗𣪗 *唯识), and Madhyamaka (𣪗𣪗 *中道) systems, each building upon and transcending its prior one all the way to the non-conceptual realization characterized by the fourth level.

The *Notes* applies to the first three teachings a syncretic Mahāyāna hermeneutics (perhaps more of a Tangut innovation) which combines classical Madhyamaka and Yogācāra models – that is, the three natures (𣪗𣪗 三性; skt. *trisvabhāva*), the two truths (𣪗𣪗 二谛; skt. *satyadvaya*) and the middle way free from reification and denigration (𣪗𣪗 离有无中道). It assigns within the commentary on each teaching the imputed nature (𣪗𣪗 遍计, *parikalpita*) to the conventional truth (𣪗𣪗 世俗谛,

³³⁰ See the *Notes* I (A: 9b4–10b2; B: 14a1–15a6), *Reasoning*, Appendix I.

saṃvṛti-satya) and the dependent (毘瓊 依他, *paratantra*) and consummate (訖譚 圓成, *pariniṣpanna*) natures to the ultimate truth (禰縹羸 胜义谛, *paramārtha-satya*). As for the middle way model, the hermeneutical gravity centers on the dependent nature, an axis around which a balanced position avoiding both reification (*samāropa*, *sgro* 'dogs) and denigration (*apavāda*, *skur* 'debs) is maintained. Below is a synoptic outline of the doctrinal architecture of the four progressively advancing teachings (for a full translation, see Appendix IIa):

1. Both object and consciousness exist (訖縹羸 *境识二有):

Trisvabhāva (1.1.1):

Parikalpita (1.1.1.1): non-Buddhist substantialist view of a self within the five-aggregate collection (毘藪縹羸縹縹縹縹縹 *五蕴 无我体上我执)

Paratantra (1.1.1.2): [sub]atom (縹縹縹 *极微尘, *paramāṇu*) & conscious continuum (縹縹縹 *识相续, *cittasamtāna*)

Pariniṣpanna (1.1.1.3): selfless-ness in the person (縹縹縹 *人无我, *pudgala-nairātmya*)

Satyadvaya (1.1.2):

Saṃvṛti-satya (1.1.2.1): imputed nature

Paramārtha-satya (1.1.2.2): dependent and consummate natures

Middle way (1.1.3):

Transcending reification (1.1.3.1): both the subatom and the conscious continuum are cognitive objects of saints (須修種種識* 圣者境界) but not of ordinary beings;

Transcending denigration (1.1.3.2): the subatom enables phenomena to arise (極微能生一切法) and the conscious continuum lasts unbroken through numerous *kalpas* (識無始生, 劫劫相續不斷).

2. Object dissolves and consciousness remains (融境留識)

Trisvabhāva (2.1.1):

Parikalpita (2.1.1.1): non-Buddhist and Hīnayānist substantialist views (on a self and on the *dharma* external to the mind respectively);

Paratantra (2.1.1.2): objective transformation in dependence on the consciousness (依識化境, i.e., 境隨識轉 *jing suishi zhuan*);

Pariniṣpanna (2.1.1.3): self-luminous reflexive gnosis (明照自證覺體, *rang rig rang gsal*).

Satyadvaya (2.1.2):

Samvṛti-satya (2.1.2.1): imputed nature;

Paramārtha-satya (2.1.2.2): dependent and consummate natures.

Middle way (2.1.3):

Transcending reification (2.1.3.1): *dharmas* arise not in dependence upon atoms (祇姪癩誦牒 *非从微尘生);

Transcending denigration (2.1.3.2): existence of self-luminous reflexive awareness (徧徧翳亂牒誦 *明照自证识有).

3. Both object and consciousness are empty (能牒癩癩 *境识双空)

Trisvabhāva (3.1.1):

Parikalpita (3.1.1.1): [non-Buddhist,] Hīnayānist and Vijñānavādin substantialist views ([on a self,]on the *dharma* external to the mind, and on self-luminous reflexive awareness respectively)

Paratantra (3.1.1.2): conditioned origination (繼繼癩誦 *依因缘生, i.e., *pratītyasamutpāda*)

Pariniṣpanna (3.1.1.3): reality of true emptiness free from four extremes (網玆玆癩癩癩 *离四边真空义)

Satyadvaya (3.1.2):

Samvṛti-satya (3.1.2.1): both non-Buddhist and Hīnayānist substantialist views belong to the perverted conventional truth (玆癩癩癩 *颠倒世俗), while the Vijñānavādin substantialist view belongs to the correct conventional truth (癩癩癩 *真实世俗)

Paramārtha-satya (3.1.2.2): [dependent and] consummate natures

Middle way (3.1.3):

Transcending reification (3.1.3.1): un-attainability of the intrinsic nature of true emptiness (禪寂翳脫蕪殺編 *真空自性不可得);

Transcending denigration (3.1.3.2): assertion through *prajñāpti* on the miraculous manifestation at the level of conventional truth (歲繖龐蕪蕪玳玳玳玳 *依世俗谛如幻化稍许假分).

4. One returns to the origin of the mind (禪源歸處 *归本还原)

Non-conceptual reality realm which is the source (禪源歸處 *本源无念法界).

The doctrinal complex presented above maps out a path whereby one (i.) establishes the existence of object and consciousness upon subatoms and realizes selfless-ness in the person, (ii.) then eliminates conceptuality toward object and abides in the status of consciousness-only (i.e., self-luminous reflexive awareness), (iii.) then dissolves the attachment to consciousness and abides in the reality of true emptiness, and (iv.) finally returns to the source of the mind, or *dharmadhātu*. These hermeneutical devices provide scaffolding for the entire doctrinal architecture through progressive levels of negation and affirmation, that is, to establish each level's ultimate truth upon the negation of the one posited in the previous level.

5.2.1.3. Relevance to Mahāyāna scholasticism and non-conceptual meditation

A remarkable difference between the *Keypoints* causal vehicle and the *Notes* doxography is their respective manners of literary presentation. While the *Keypoints* adopts more poetical language to convey the philosophical insights, the *Notes* applies more sophisticated and formal scholastic devices to the philosophical articulation. Otherwise, these two schemes parallel each other in terms of the progressive structure. While the *Keypoints*'s first stage on the effects of karmic processes and Buddhist moral lessons is skipped in the *Notes*, its second stage on subatomic particles and third on conscious continuum altogether correspond to the Hīnayānist level “both object and consciousness exist” in the *Notes*. The fourth and fifth stages on selflessness in objective sphere and physical body roughly correspond to the Vijñānavādin level “object dissolves and consciousness remains” in the *Notes*, although the important notion of self-luminous *svasaṃvedana* is not uttered at all in the *Keypoints* for it only focuses on the elimination of apprehensions on the objective world to the eclipse of the mind-only articulations. Then the sixth stage on selflessness in consciousness itself and the seventh on true emptiness correspond to the Mādhyamika level “both object and consciousness are empty” in the *Notes*. Both the *Keypoints* and the *Notes* deal with the issue of non-duality between emptiness and existence, though with different vocabulary and expressions. Finally, the eighth stage on the origin perceived as luminous and non-conceptual – together with its extension the ninth stage on liberation through non-cognition – corresponds to the fourth *Notes* level “one returns to the source [of the mind].”

The doctrinal hierarchy presented in both the *Keypoints* causal vehicle and the *Notes* doxography mirrors not so much a chronological and comparative presentation of

different doctrinal schools as a scheme assigning teachings to rungs on a ladder leading to non-conceptual realization. As part of an ongoing Mahāyāna scholastic project of discursively mapping out a cognitive path to non-conceptual meditation (*nirvikalpa-samādhi*), it sketches a structure whereby a progressively deeper degree of reality unfolds in the practitioner’s experiential domain. In the particularly Tangut expression, the three doctrinal positions, namely Hīnayāna, Vijñānavāda, and Madhyamaka, are laid out in order in the *Keypoints*’s first seven stages or the *Notes*’s first three levels. The final two stages on non-conceptuality and non-cognition or the fourth level “returning to the source [of the mind]” embodied new doctrinal developments within the Mahāyāna scholastic milieu, namely the rise of the Buddha-nature doctrine now occupying the position of ultimacy in the traditional Madhyamaka and Yogācāra frameworks. The phenomenological content of this final level – namely the luminous and non-conceptual origin or the non-conceptual *dharmadhātu* which is the source – represents a transcendence over the image-free (*nirābhāsa*) cognitive status characteristic of “emptiness” posited by its previous Madhyamaka level.

Below is a brief chart of the correspondences between the *Keypoints* causal vehicle and the *Notes* doxography:

<u><i>Keypoints</i></u>	<u><i>Notes</i></u>	<u>Doxographical position</u>
1. Antidote to the karmic trio	1. Both object and consciousness exist	Hīnayāna
2. Contemplating objective particle		
3. Contemplating subject as impermanent		

4. Contemplating object as selfless	2. Object dissolves and consciousness remains	Vijñānavāda
5. Contemplating physical body as selfless		
6. Contemplating consciousness as selfless	3. Both object and consciousness are empty	Madhyamaka
7. Contemplating phenomena as empty		
8. Contemplating the origin as non-conceptual	4. One returns to the source [of the mind]	Buddha-nature
9. Liberation through non-recognition		

Such an orderly exposition of Hīnayāna, Vijñānavāda, Madhyamaka, and Buddha-nature agrees with the doctrinal hierarchy as laid out in Maitrīpa's *Tattvaratnāvalī* doxography which culminates in Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka. Maitrīpa puts forth a doctrinal system of four tenets, namely Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Yogācāra, and Madhyamaka. The first two belong to the first Hīnayāna level in the *Keypoints-Notes*. The third one Yogācāra, further subdivided into Sākāravāda and Nirākāravāda, correspond to the second Vijñānavāda level. The fourth one is subdivided into the Māyopamādvayavāda and Apratiṣṭhānavāda branches of Madhyamaka. While the Māyopamādvayavāda which mainly asserts the illusory nature of reality corresponds to the third Madhyamaka level, the Apratiṣṭhānavāda which admits a non-reified reality corresponds to the fourth Buddha-nature level.³³¹

Furthermore, the relationship between the third Madhyamaka level and fourth Buddha-nature level in the *Keypoints-Notes* can also be understood in the light of

³³¹ C.f. Chapter Three (4.1.3.1. Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka).

svasaṃvedana idealism, and *pratītyasamutpāda* ontology consecutively, and finally realizes the Madhyamaka notion of emptiness.³³⁵ According to the Tibetan doxographical tradition represented by Ye-shes-sde and dPal-dbyangs, while Bhāvya’s Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Śāntarakṣita’s Yogācāra-Madhyamaka share in common the ultimate-truth postulation on *sūnyatā* and *anutpāda*, they differ at the conventional-truth descriptions about *cittamātra* – that is, while the former frames its understanding within a *pratītyasamutpāda* ontology, the latter subscribes to a mental idealism of *svasaṃvedana*. Although the *Notes* doxography is quite straightforward in terms of its predilection towards Yogācāra-Madhyamaka in that it posits a Vijñānavādin *svasaṃvedana* at the second level “object dissolves and consciousness remains,” it does leave room for the *pratītyasamutpāda* ontology at the third level of Madhyamaka in positing under the rubric of “transcending denigration” a conventional truth of “miraculous manifestation.” Moreover, another echo with Śāntarakṣita is found in the attribution of consciousness (as in the *Keypoints*) or self-luminous reflexive awareness (as in the *Notes*) to the correct conventional truth.

³³⁵ The existence of a Tangut hagiography of the 8th-century Great Perfection (rDzogs-chen) teacher Vairocana alludes to the possible presence of Ye-shes-sde in the Tangut collection. The Tangut text is titled “A General Presentation of the Five-cycle Dharmadhātu” (*tsjir kiej ηwə djij •jij gu bu* 禪儀統編總序 *法界五部總序, *Chos dbyings sde lnga spyir bstan pa). Only the second half of the work survives. The extant part is concerning Vairocana’s study journey to India. I thank Professor Kirill Solonin for exposing me to the existence of this text. Solonin’s transcription of the text could be accessed through the link <https://www.academia.edu/38166091/GreatImage.pdf>. Vairocana – one of the first seven Tibetans to be ordained as Buddhist monks (*sad mi mi bdun*) – is said to have brought the mind-class (*sems sde*) and expanse-class (*klong sde*) teachings of Great Perfection from India to Tibet. According to the *’Dra ’bag chen mo* which includes a historiography of the Great Perfection transmissions from India to Tibet and an extensive hagiography of Vairocana, Vairocana is also known as Ye-shes-sde sūtra-wise; see the *Bai ’dra* (96.4): *mtshan kyang mdo ltar ye shes sde* |. Karmay (2007: 30), however, considers this identification as “simply a fancy,” since Ye-shes-sde belongs to the family of sNa-nam, while Vairocana seems to bear the family name Ba-gor.

The *Keypoints-Notes* progressive scheme defined by a cataphatic description of ultimacy finds an Indian parallel in Ratnākaraśānti’s four-*yogabhūmi* scheme whereby one refines his or her objective apprehension (*ālambana*, *dmigs pa*) step by step: one first apprehends on external object (*dnegos po*), then on *cittamātra*, on *tathatā* (*de bzhin nyid*), and finally sees the *mahāyāna* (*theg pa chen po*). To examine the last two stages in both schemes against the *Laṅkāvatāra* verses (X. 256–258), the transition from the construct-free cognitive status (i.e., *ālambana* on *tathatā* or “both object and consciousness are empty”) to the ultimate realization featured by a cataphasis (i.e., a perception of *mahāyāna* or “returning to the source”) bears the exact correspondence with the lines *nirābhāsasthito yogī mahāyānaṃ na paśyati* and *jñānaṃ nirātmakaṃ śreṣṭhaṃ nirābhāse na paśyati*. Both lines indicate the notion that the mere image-free status (i.e., *nirābhāsa*) does not lead one to ultimate realization, that is, *mahāyāna* or the supreme gnosis (i.e., *śreṣṭha-jñāna*).

An example institutionally and temporally more immediate to our *Keypoints-Notes* cluster is found in the Assembly Teaching (*tshogs chos*) collections of sGam-po-pa who drew exoteric doctrinal inspiration mainly from Atiśa (982–1054),³³⁶ a disciple of Ratnākaraśānti. In the *Tshogs chos legs mdzes ma*, sGam-po-pa sketched a fourfold scheme for the fundamental reality (*gnas lugs gtan la phab*) by progressively eliminating conceptualization (*rnam par rtog pa thams cad gcod par byed pa*).³³⁷ The ontological status (*yin lugs*) one has to undergo throughout the four stages includes that of appearance (*snang ba*) to be recognized as mind (*sems*), of mind to be recognized as the

³³⁶ Atiśa left a remarkable presence in the Xixia collection, either as the author of doctrinal compositions or an important personality in the tantric lineage accounts; see Solonin 2016.

³³⁷ See the *Tshogs legs* (ff. 57a3–60a1).

nature of reality (*chos nyid*), of the nature of reality to be recognized as the inexpressible (*brjod du med pa*), and of the inexpressible to be recognized as the Dharmakāya (*chos kyi sku*). It is therefore obvious that sGam po pa's scheme agrees perfectly with both Ratnākaraśānti's and that of the *Keypoints-Notes* in terms of both meditative content and progressive structure. Below is a graphic representation of the levels of teaching and practice in the systems or schemes discussed:³³⁸

Śāntarakṣita	Ye-shes-sde	Ratnākaraśānti	sGam-po-pa	Keypoints-Notes
	Hīnayāna	<i>ālambana</i> on <i>artha</i>	<i>snang ba</i>	Hīnayāna
<i>svasaṃvedana</i>	<i>svasaṃvedana</i> (<i>saṃvṛti</i> of Yogācāra- Madhyamaka)	<i>ālambana</i> on <i>cittamātra</i>	<i>sems</i>	Vijñānavāda
<i>anupāda</i>	<i>pratītyasamutpāda</i> (<i>saṃvṛti</i> of Sautrāntika- Madhyamaka)	<i>ālambana</i> on <i>tathatā</i>	<i>chos nyid</i>	Madhyamaka
		<i>nirābhāsa</i>	<i>brjod du med pa</i>	
	<i>anupāda</i> & <i>nairātmya</i>	absence of <i>ālambana</i> (perception of the <i>mahāyāna</i>)	Dharmakāya	Buddha-nature

To summarize, the presentation of doctrinal progression in both the *Keypoints* causal vehicle and the *Notes* doxography follows the intellectual line revolving around the Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation formula: one first withdraws from the external

³³⁸ The graphic correspondence is only rough and for heuristic purposes. The typological parallels among systems does not necessarily imply historical inheritance.

world and abides in mind-only, then realizes non-dual consciousness, and finally transcends consciousness and abides in a non-conceptual status. Its placing of the Buddha-nature doctrine at the pinnacle implies its subscription to the “*mahāyāna-is-not-seen*” reading of the *Laṅkāvatāra* verses (X: 256–258) and thus its advocate of a cognitive status beyond the merely image-free (*nirābhāsa*). The entire scheme – no matter how differently presented in discursive form either in the *Keypoints* or the *Notes* – maps out a path to the “positive-mystical” Buddhist soteriology shared across those Mahāyāna philosophical traditions which were inspired by the Buddha-nature doctrine to account for the tantric phenomenology (e.g. Maitrīpa’s and Ratnākaraśānti’s).

5.2.2. The layout of tantric procedures: the resultant vehicle

The *Keypoints*’s presentation of the resultant vehicle lays out a progressive tantric path for practitioners to approach Mahāmudrā. It starts with the “generation phase” (*utpattikrama, bskyed rim*) practices of visualizing the deity *in* one’s front (RV 1) and *as* oneself (RV 2). Then, it navigates one to the “perfection phase” (*utpanna-/niṣpanna-karama, rdzogs rim*) practices for which the Psychic Heat (*caṇḍālī, gtum mo*) yoga (RV 4) induced by sexual union with a consort (RV 3) serves as the foundation. After the Psychic Heat stage, one consecutively manipulates seminal nuclei (*bindu, thig le*) as a means to achieve luminous bliss (RV 5) and energy channels (*nāḍī, rtsa*) to achieve tranquil bliss (RV 6). The seventh stage focuses on the attainment of accomplishing the *buddha*’s body in oneself, which is termed as empty bliss of ultimacy (RV 7). Then, the resultant vehicle converges with the previous causal vehicle in the eighth and ninth stages. Despite the involvement with desires in the resultant vehicle approach, the last two stages

on the bliss of display through non-conceptuality (RV 8) and the great bliss through non-cognition (RV 9) respectively are considered to share the experiential domain with their causal vehicle counterparts.

The first stage – contemplation of the Buddha in front – presents scripted encounters with the Buddha in a maṇḍalic environment, which are structured by tantric *sādhana* techniques such as visualization, hand gesture, and mantric recitation. As a result, the Buddha’s physical presence is imaginatively fabricated:

The inanimate world (*bhājanaloka*) is the container of suffering which characterizes the six realms (娑胝 *六道, *ṣaḍgati*).

The unworldly platform of awakening (儼徠茲彝 *出世道场) becomes the realm of bliss for the five paths (儼胝 *五位, *pañcamārga*).

Surrounded by relatives, one suffers from agony, discontent, and chaos.

Circled by savants, one partakes of bliss and serenity. (RV 1a)

As such,

The believer digging [the stone] and carving [the Buddhist statues], the afflictions ignited by the burning house (儼儼 *火宅, *adīptāgāra*) die down.

The practitioner reciting and contemplating, miraculous transformations (儼儼 *神变, *vikurvaṇa*) are displayed in the platform of awakening.

With a predilection for the mind, one leaves the retinue behind.

In accordance with the concentration, one contemplates on the *buddha*'s body
(𣪠𣪠 *佛身, *buddhakāya*) vividly. (RV 1b)

Its non-tantric prototypes already existing in the early and classical Mahāyāna literature,³³⁹ this scripted encounter with the Buddha represents a dense ritualization of the more individual and spontaneous scenarios of Buddha manifestation found in proto-tantric settings, and came to be retroactively understood as the earliest phase of Buddhist Tantra, later classified as Kriyā- and Caryā-tantras.

The second stage – contemplation of oneself as the Buddha – concerns the self-identification with the enlightened deity or the Buddha, the earliest occurrences of which were traced in the Yogatantra literature such as the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* and the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi*:

Family and retinue characterize the base of birth and death (i.e., *saṃsāra*) on this shore (𣪠𣪠 *此岸, *apāraṃ*).

The assembly of *buddhas* in the *maṇḍala* is the root of *nirvāṇa* (𣪠𣪠 *涅槃) on the other shore (𣪠𣪠 *彼岸, *pāraṃ*).

Names and designations inflict sufferings on the psycho-physiological complex one life after another.

³³⁹ Harrison (1978) presents a classical example of the proto-tantric Mahāyāna description of the encounter scenario seen in the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*.

Hand gestures made via the physical body exhibit the playfulness at will through
eons. (RV 2a)

As such,

Being born and dead, one transforms into the mundane body of blood and flesh.

Free from birth and death, one accomplishes the body of Vajra-Buddha (釋藏梵語 *
金剛佛身).

The continuum of thought-moments in the mundane psycho-physiological
complex ceases.

The mind in the awakened psycho-physiological complex becomes luminous and
shines forth lights. (RV 2b)

Traditionally, the visualization of the enlightened being in front (*bdun bskyed*) and of
oneself as the enlightened being (*bdag bskyed*) make up the *deity yoga* praxis. Tsong-
kha-pa (1357–1419) in his *sNgags rim chen mo* even identifies the latter as a defining
characteristic of Vajrayāna in contrast to Pāramitāyāna.³⁴⁰

Then, the path turns to the “perfection phase” practices. The third and fourth
stages together present the Psychic Heat practice – considered as the foundation of the
entire body of “perfection phase” practices – in which one relies on sexual union with a
female consort to stimulate the generation of the *caṅḍālī* experience:

³⁴⁰ See Buswell & Lopez 2014: *s.v. devatāyoga*.

(The third stage on contemplating the other as the Buddha)

The pursuit of purity by means of the pure (禱敕禱禱 *以淨求淨) reveals the common teachings of all *buddhas*.

The pursuit of purity by means of the impure (蕤敕禱禱 *以穢求淨) sheds light on the distinct seal of the Buddha.

One taking the three poisons as the antidote (散亂熾熾 *三毒作藥), the three realms subside as baseless.

One taking the five desires as the path (儼綏禱禱 *五欲為道), the five destinies of *samsāra* become rootless. (RV 3a)

As such,

Self-transforming, the *dāka* (禱禱 *勇父) plays and sports, exhaling “Haha.”

Taking delight in the other’s body, one attends to the marvelous *dākinī* (禱禱 *勇母).

Four joys (綏熾 *四喜) and four blisses (綏禱 *四樂) arising equally, one experientially realizes the great bliss.

Five fleshs (儼熾 *五肉) and five medicines (儼熾 *五藥) being intrinsically pure, one partakes of the good medicine. (RV 3b)

(The fourth stage on sensual bliss through psychic heat)

The fire blazing up from the bottom (熾耀熾耀 *下火炎炎) extinguishes all diseases and afflictions.

The nectar (i.e., *bindu*) melting down from the top (漉瀉瀉瀉 *上药滔滔) stimulates the attainment of superknowledge.

The old being transformed into the young, one's complexion and vitality is beyond the sun and moon.

The short being elongated, one's life span exceeds that of the universe. (RV 4a)

As such,

One contemplating the fire in the navel (熾耀熾耀 *观脐中焰), it goes up to the crown and burns the wheel (*cakra*, *'khor lo*) there.

One observing the nectar dripping down from the crown (瀉瀉瀉瀉 *察顶中流), it permeates the whole body through the feet.

The four wheels – namely the wheel of great bliss (*mahāsukhacakra*, *bde chen gyi 'khor lo*), of enjoyment (*sambhogacakra*, *longs spyod kyi 'khor lo*), of reality (*dharmacakra*, *chos kyi 'khor lo*), and of emanation (*nirmāṇacakra*, *sprul pa'i 'khor lo*) – operate in a self-contained manner, whether consummate or disintegrated.

The four blisses – namely joy (*ānanda*, *dga' ba*), supreme joy (*paramānanda*, *mchog dga'*), extraordinary joy (*viramānanda*, *khyad dga'*), and co-emergent joy (*sahajānanda*, *lhan cig skyes dga'*) – descend (*yas bab*) and ascend (*mas brtan*) without obscurations. (RV 4b)

The third stage on another's body as the skillful means (*gzhan lus kyi thabs*) grounds the sexual yoga practice in the fundamental tantric theory of taking engagement with sensual desires for the path. Building upon the sensual bliss generated in the third stage, the fourth stage goes on to delineate the Psychic Heat practical procedure based on a physiological map of the central channel (*avadhūtī, rtsa dbu ma*) along with four energy wheels located on it.

Considered as the foundation of the Buddhist tantric *subtle body* practice, the Psychic Heat practice focuses on the sexuality-driven manipulation of energies up and down the central channel. The *Hevajratantra* and its early commentary *Yogaratanmālā* provide paradigmatic accounts of Psychic Heat as well as related subtle physiologies. The second half of the *Hevajratantra*'s first chapter introduces the subtle body system of thirty-two channels (*nāḍī, rtsa*) and a variety of fourfold lists, among which the four *cakras* are the wheel of great bliss (*mahāsukhacakra*) at the crown, of enjoyment (*sambhogacakra*) at the throat, of reality (*dharmacakra*) at the heart, and of emanation (*nirmāṇacakra*) at the navel.³⁴¹ The last verse briefly summarizes the Psychic Heat practice:³⁴²

³⁴¹ See the *HV*: 1.1.23 (Snellgrove 1959a: 49): *nirmāṇacakre padmaṃ catuḥśaṣṭīdalaṃ | dharmacakre aṣṭadalaṃ | sambhogacakre ṣoḍaśadalaṃ | mahāsukhacakre dvātriṃśaddalaṃ | cakrasaṃkhyākrameṇa vyavasthāpanaṃ | (sprul pa'i 'khor lo la padma mdab ma drug cu rtsa bzhi dang | chos kyi 'khor lo la mdab ma brgyad dang | longs spyod rdzogs pa'i 'khor lo la mdab ma bcu drug dang | bde ba chen po'i 'khor lo la mdab ma sum cu rtsa gnyis so || 'khor lo'i grangs kyi rim pas nam par bzhag pa)*.

³⁴² See the *HV*: 1.1.31 (Snellgrove 1959a: 50): *caṇḍālī jvalitā nābau || dahati pañcatathāgatān || dahati ca locanādīḥ || dagdhe 'haṃ sravate śaśī || (lte bar gtum mo 'bar ba yis || de bzhin gshegs pa lnga bsregs shing || spyan la sogs pa yang bsregs te || bsregs pas ri bong can haṃ 'dzag ||)*.

Caṇḍālī blazes up at the navel.

She burns the Five Buddhas.

She burns Locanā and the others.

HAM is burnt and the Moon melts.

According to the *Yogaratnamālā* commentary on this verse,³⁴³ the Psychic Heat or fire blazes up either by sexual energy (*mahārāgā*, 'dod chags chen po) or breath manipulation (*vāyunābhrāmya yatnataḥ*, *rlung gis 'bad nas bskor byas pas*), goes up along the central channel to the wheel of great bliss, and burns the *HAM* syllable at the crown. Then, the gnosis of great bliss (*mahāsukhajñāna*) drips down from the wheel of great bliss, and the *sahaja* experience is induced. Attributed to a Kāṇhapāda in the Sanskrit text (or Kṛṣṇa Paṇḍita as recorded in the Tibetan version), the *Yogaratnamālā* served as a direct scriptural source of inspiration for Tilopa's Psychic Heat instructions credited to a Cāryapa (one epithet for Kāṇha).³⁴⁴

The *Śaddharmopadeśa* attributed to Tilopa mentions the four joys (*dga' bzhi*) which represent a cascading series of ever intensifying sensations of orgiastic bliss experienced by the practitioner as the downward flow of energy from the crown takes place.³⁴⁵ Once one becomes familiarized with the four joys, according to the *Karṇatantravajrapada* (another seminal source for the Six-Teaching practices), the energy winds of consciousness (*rlung sems*) enter the central channel, thus inducing the

³⁴³ See the *YRM* ad HV 1.1.31; c.f. Torricelli 1996a: 3–4.

³⁴⁴ See Torricelli 1996a: 4–6.

³⁴⁵ See the *ŚDh*: 10–11 (Torricelli 1996b: 150–151).

experience of non-conceptuality (*mi rtog pa*), bliss (*bde ba*), and luminosity (*gsal ba*).³⁴⁶

The *Keypoints* further specifies this familiarization with the four joys as containing two directions of vertical progression through the four wheels on the central channel, namely the descending four joys from above (*yas bab kyi dga' bzhi*) and the ascending four joys supported from below (*mas brtan gyi dga' bzhi*).

The fifth and sixth stages, building upon the Psychic Heat accomplishment through which the vital energy enters the central channel, involve practices corresponding to the Illusory Body (*māyākāya*, *sgyu lus*) and Clear Light (*prabhāsvara*, *'od gsal*) yogas in the Six-Teaching system, the origins of which can be traced to the *Guhyasamāja* exegetical tradition:

(The fifth stage on luminous bliss through seminal nuclei)

The coarse dissolving into the subtle (微融微融 *集粗入细), dust and dirt submerges into subatomic particles.

The coarse issuing from the subtle (微融微融 *依细去粗), subatomic particles transform into dust and dirt.

Dissolving multifoldness (*sna tshogs*) into singleness (*gcig bu*), one deconstructs the appearance and illuminates the nature.

Multifoldedness issuing from singleness, one eclipses the nature and manifests the appearance. (RV 5a)

³⁴⁶ See the KP (303a2–4): *gtum mo bde drod rang 'bar lam gyi gzhung | ... dga' bzhi goms pas rtsa rlung thig le 'dres | dhū tir rlung sems tshud pas mi rtog pa | nyon mongs rang zhi bde gsal rgyun mi 'chad | ngo bo mthong nas chos sku'i ngang du gnas /*; Torricelli 1998: 395–6

As such,

The twigs dissolving into the root, the nucleus becomes lucid.

The twigs issuing from the root, the *buddha*'s body appears vividly.

Dissolving and issuing without obscurations, the coarse and subtle are interchangeable and interpenetrating.

Concealing and manifesting freely, appearance and nature display perfect interfusion and unanimity. (RV 5b)

(The sixth stage on tranquil bliss through *nāḍī*)

As subtle as non-existent, the hair tip appears vague and dim.

As non-existent as subtle, the *buddha*'s body appears vividly.

The essence being vague and dim, the multitude of afflictions dissolve.

The function (𪚗𪚗 *功相, *prajoyana*) being manifest, the thousand-purity miraculous transformations arise. (RV 6a)

As such,

Vivid and manifest, the nuclei is separate from illusory signs.

Dissolving into nebulosity, the channels merge with reality.

All signs retreating to the origin (𪚗𪚗𪚗𪚗 *万相归源), it enjoys solitude in nebulosity.

All matters deriving from the single nature (一性 *事出一性), it shines forth
vivid and manifest. (RV 6b)

As the energy winds of consciousness abide in the central channel – specifically at the heart nucleus (*snying gi thig le*) – as a result of the Psychic Heat practice, one manipulates the visual experiences of light into a more spontaneous “deity yoga” framework now referred to as the “Illusory Body” than the previously scripted visualization.³⁴⁷ The *Keypoints* depicts a process of dual directions: (i) dissolving shifting

³⁴⁷ For Tilopa’s instructions on the Clear Light and Illusory Body *yogas* in the *Śaddharmopadeśa*, see the *SDh*: 32–42 (Torricelli 1996b: 154–155):

[Here is] the *yoga* [centered on the experience] of the central channel.
When the [essence of] thinking activity (*citta*) dwells in the central channel,
[And this very essence of] thinking activity abides in the drop of the heart,
[Then you will have visions such as]: light, a radiating rainbow,
sunlight and moonlight merging at dawn,
A light like the rising of the sun and the moon,
Appearances (*ābhāsa*) of deities, bodies, and so forth,
[At that stage,] all the fields [of experience] will be purified.
[This] great path of the *yogin-s*
Is Nāgārjuna’s instruction.

(*rnal 'byor a wa dhū tī pa | a wa dhū tīr sems gnas pas | snying gi thig ler sems brtan pas | 'od dang 'od zer 'ja' ris dang | skya rens nyi 'od zla 'od dang | lha dang sku yi snang ba sogs | sna tshogs zhing khams dag par 'gyur | rnal 'byor pa yi lam chen te | nā gārdzu na 'i u pa de sha 'o* |).

And the *SDh*: 15–24 (Torricelli 1996b: 153):

[Once] all residences and residents in the three worlds
Are taken for a sample of illusion, dream, and so on,
[Everything,] moving and stationary, is perfectly purified.
The multitude of the deities are illusions, images in a mirror.
Vajrasattva has been well-drawn [in front of a mirror],
[His] reflected image is regarded as a crystal-clear apparition:

experiences of light into the radiant light of the heart nucleus and (ii) re-emerging from that dissolution now in the form of a gnostic body which gives expressions to one's own inner embodied fluidity.

After one masters dissolving and materializing energy winds and experienced lights in the central channel, the path goes on to the seventh stage focused on the empty bliss of ultimacy:

Effulgent in color and shape, the ability to manifest the enjoyment and emanation bodies is the base.

Ultimately empty and blissful, the ability to realize the truth body is the root.

The *buddha's* body which is taken as the platform of awakening pervades the entire reality realm (*dharmadhātu, chos kyi dbyings*).

The true emptiness characteristic of the great bliss continues unbroken into the future. (RV 7a)

As such,

That very [image], being the form of an illusion,
Is [to be] observed in the manner of the twelve examples of illusion (*māyopama*).
[This] *yoga* consisting of piercing the illusion
Is Nāgārjuna's instruction.

(*snod bcud khams gsum ma lus pa | sgyu ma rmi lam la sogs dpes | 'gro 'dug spyod lam kun tu sbyang | lha tshogs sgyu ma me long gzugs | rdo rje sems dpa' legs bris pa | gzugs brnyan gsal bar snang dang mtshungs | de nyid sgyu ma'i gzugs bzhin du | sgyu dpe bcu gnyis ltar mthong ba | rnal 'byor sgyu ma'i don mthong ba'o | nā gārdzu na'i u pa de sha'o |*).

Transcending the four marks of conditioned existence, the empty bliss of ultimacy is tranquil.

Five awakened marks appearing, one is surrounded by extensive superknowledges.

Engaging with desires or not, within the sensual desire one plays with the great bliss.

Whether one apprehends an object or not, the objective sphere is the assembly of *buddhas* that is the platform of awakening. (RV 7b)

This stage sets forth a transcendent position beyond the matrix of “generation phase” and “perfection phase” practices. Immersing him- or herself in tantric experiences and symbolisms stemming from the previous stages, one seeks for the great bliss from true emptiness immanent within these miraculous manifestations in the reality realm (*dharmadhātu*) and thus cultivates a mental detachment from the accomplished representations and superknowledges. The next and final two stages – respectively on the bliss of display through non-conceptuality and the great bliss through non-cognition – are considered to overlap with their causal vehicle counterparts, and therefore the *Keypoints* does not provide explanatory verses for them.

To summarize, the resultant vehicle presentation details a complete practical package of Buddhist Tantra, from the “generation phase” in which one visualizes the deity in front and as oneself, to the “perfection phase” in which one generates the Psychic Heat through sexual union with a consort, manipulates energy winds to cultivate Clear Light and Illusory Body, and finally recedes to emptiness to engage with the non-

symbolic (*mtshan med*) mode of contemplation.³⁴⁸ In addition, although the *subtle body* praxis as systematized as the Six-Teaching set has not been entirely presented in the resultant vehicle path, its essential part is included, for Psychic Heat sets the foundation for the whole Six-Teaching package and Clear Light and Illusory Body are considered as the main body, while the rest are only derivative from the former three.³⁴⁹

Concluding remarks

From the first through sixth stages, the causal and resultant vehicles as presented in the *Keypoints* hardly parallel each other. Each vehicle displays its own track of progression. While the causal vehicle's first six stages follow the contemplative logic wherein one's objective apprehension gradually turns inwards, the resultant vehicle's fully explore the vivid tactile sensations of heat, bliss, and energy movement in the subtle body physiology. Any attempts to read both vehicles in parallel in these stages appear arbitrary and forceful. However, from the seventh stage onwards, the causal and resultant vehicles seem to converge in phenomenological terms. Both vehicles' seventh stages focus on emptiness, though with different objects of which the contemplative experience is empty. While the seventh stage in the causal vehicle transcends the reflexive awareness (*svasamvedana*), that in the resultant vehicle transcends the tactile sensations and visual representations stirred by tantric exertions. The two vehicles truly converge in the final two stages on non-conceptuality and non-cognition respectively, which is also made explicit in the *Keypoints* itself.

³⁴⁸ C.f. Chapter Two, note 141.

³⁴⁹ See Yang 2013.

The parallelism between two vehicles in the last three stages is more of a nexus that bridges the sūtric and tantric paths in the realm of non-conceptual realization, also recognized as Mahāmudrā. Philosophically, *mahāmudrā* as an index of ultimacy for the tantric path was read into Apratiṣṭhāna-Madhyamaka and further correlated with the sūtra-derived Amanasikāra approach by Maitrīpa’s circle. In terms of the experiential domain, both the exoteric contemplation on emptiness and the esoteric dissolution of tantric imageries are brought onto the same plane. However, as Germano (1994) notes, these two modes of contemplation are “simultaneously radically similar, and radically different,” for “the actual ‘content’ and style of these meditations when isolated out from their context is near identical, and yet, when contextualized discursively and practically, the distinct semantic shapings of that similar ‘content’ results in arguably quite different practices despite their formal similarities.”³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ See Germano 1994: 220–221.

6. Conclusion

This dissertation traces an intellectual history of Mahāmudrā epitomized in the Tangut work *Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate* as well as its *Notes* commentary. Rooted in Buddhist Tantra, Mahāmudrā took its form in Indian and Tibetan post-tantric ethos across the Himalayan range. Employed in its initial genesis as ritual terminology, *mahāmudrā* gradually rose to soteriological significance in the profoundly gnostic Yoganiruttaratantra cycle, in which the term was associated with the *sahajānanda* generated through the *sexual yoga* praxis. Primarily in the interpretative hands of the siddhas, *mahāmudrā* further came to be applied through synecdoche as an index denoting an absolute level of reality, or its subjective component nondual gnosis (*advayajñāna*), or the yogic and contemplative approaches to that reality. As such, *mahāmudrā* gradually separated off in rhetoric – yet still practically indebted to – from the tantric matrices of yogic and ritualistic exertions and started to be employed to evoke philosophical themes such as emptiness, mind-only, and Buddha-nature shared across the traditional Mahāyāna milieu. At this point, *mahāmudrā* became Mahāmudrā, as much a central topic celebrated as the peak of Buddhist doctrine and praxis as a doxographic rubric signifying a full-fledged tradition integrating and transcending both sūtric and tantric approaches to ultimacy.

Drawing on particular discursive and practical sources, siddhas and tantric theorists devised and articulated a variety of approaches – tantric and non-tantric – to Mahāmudrā. As the mass of Yoganiruttara tantric doctrines and yogic techniques flooded over the Himalayas around the 11th century, three Mahāmudrā thead-cum-transmissions

from India to Tibet can be traced, namely the the *dohā* and Amanasikāra cycles passed down through the Saraha-Maitrīpa circle, the Six-Teaching praxis through Tilopa and Nāropa, and the Sahajayoga praxis of four *yogas* through Atiśa. All these three threads came to be integrated into systematic presentation in the Tibetan bKa'-brgyud Mahāmudrā curriculum, labeled as essence Mahāmudrā, tantric Mahāmudrā, and sūtric Mahāmudrā respectively.

As a continuation of the Indian and Tibetan Mahāmudrā traditions, the 12th-century Tangut *Keypoints-Notes* cluster contains a transmission lineage mainly based on the classical Saraha-Maitrīpa line. Yet, it is more of a collage patching together different Indian and Tibetan claims to spiritual legacy and religious authority than a homogenous line of reality. The semantic and doctrinal terrain laid out in this Tangut Mahāmudrā cluster shows a twofold paradigm of causal and resultant paths to the ultimate reality or spiritual status Mahāmudrā in a progressive “path stage” structure. The causal vehicle (i.e., the sūtric path) – paralleled by the *Notes* doxography of Mahāyāna philosophies – schemes a path structure whereby a progressively deeper degree of reality unfolds in the practitioner’s experiential domain, the procedure of which follows the intellectual line of the Mahāyāna non-conceptual meditation formula. The resultant vehicle (i.e., the tantric path path), on the other hand, lays out a standard practical package of Buddhist Tantra, from the “generation phase” *deity yoga* to the “perfection phase” *subtle body* of Psychic Heat, Clear Light, and Illusory Body, and finally to the dissolution of all tantric imageries and experiences. The two vehicles converge in non-conceptual realization and culminate in the final stage of non-recognition – i.e., even non-conceptuality itself is not felt.

The resultant vehicle – or the tantric mode of practices – marks a move towards felt tactile sensations, which contrasts the exclusive reliance on visionary capacity displayed in the causal vehicle. Yet the parallelism between the two in the experiential domain of non-conceptuality reveals the nexus in which the sūtric and tantric paths are bridged. The Mahāyāna emptiness contemplation and the non-symbolic mode of “perfection phase” practices are thus brought onto the same experiential plane. In philosophical terms, this is also in line with the efforts of Maitrīpa’s circle to read Mahāmudrā into a “positive-mystical” paradigm of Buddhist soteriology, a Mahāyāna scholastic project of accounting for an intuitive approach to ultimacy along the Buddha-nature line.

Now I conclude the dissertation with some methodological reflections for future studies. In Buddhism, philosophical thinking and scholastic writing are highly charged with soteriological consideration, and thus are structurally bound up with a consideration of spiritual praxis.³⁵¹ Nonetheless, as much as a philosophical insight lays a claim to universality across time and place, its discursive form is conditioned historically and culturally. To broaden our vision of the Tangut Mahāmudrā’s intellectual horizon – the historical genesis and strata of which is partially revealed in this dissertation – an equally important synchronic analytical lens should be allowed due weight. Parallel to Mahāmudrā as an inclusive rubric of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist typologies, the Huayan “Perfect Teaching” (*yuanjiao* 圆教) paradigm which was simultaneously current in Xixia has served a similar function in accommodating both exoteric and esoteric teachings of

³⁵¹ For more detailed “reflections on the place of philosophy in the study of Buddhism,” see Seyfort Rugg 1995.

Sinitic origins.³⁵² Another parallel inherent in Mahāmudrā and the Huayan “Perfect Teaching” lies in a common postulation of progressive realization of reality, though with variations in discursive details.³⁵³ Towards the early Yuan (1271–1368) the latest, the Huayan scheme overrode the Mahāmudrā in the Xixia domain (and further extending to the Mongol Yuan domain) to become a normative model embracing the wholesale Buddhist traditions, including those of Tibetan tantric Buddhist traditions.³⁵⁴ Besides possible ideological-political factors, an intra-religious comparative study of Mahāmudrā and Huayan helps account for the systematically structured philosophical processes and tensions as well as philosophers’ awareness of the possible complementarity between the two. This could lead to a new perspective of the Buddhist intellectual landscape in the Hexi Corridor during the 12th century.

³⁵² For the institutional and doctrinal sources of the Huayan Buddhism as well as its specific forms and religious dynamics in Xixia, see Solonin 2014.

³⁵³ For the Huayan doxographical scheme and its fourfold contemplation of the Dharma-dhātu (*fajie guan* 法界观) as a major doctrinal source of inspiration for the Tangut Sinitic Buddhism, see Solonin 2014: 170.

³⁵⁴ A work representative of this trend is the *Dafang guangfo huayanjing haiyin daochang shizhong xingyuan changpian lichan yi* 大方广佛华严经海印道场十种行愿常偏礼懺仪 by Yixing Huijue 一行慧觉, a Yuan monk of Tangut descent; see Solonin 2012b.

Appendix I

Tangut Text, Chinese Transliteration, and English Translation:

Extracts from the *Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate* (鞞鞞織糝苾苾 *大印究竟
要集)

Introductory remarks

This part contains the Tangut text, Chinese transliteration, and English translation of the “twofold scheme of sūtric and tantric vehicles” extracted from the *Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate*. The *Keypoints* exists in three recensions, namely Tang.#inv. 345#2526 (xylograph, 27 folios, incomplete), Tang.#inv. 345#824 (manuscript, 20 folios, incomplete), and Inv. 2876 (manuscript, 24 folios, incomplete). For my critical edition, I use Tang.#inv. 345#2526 and Tang.#inv. 345#824. The following sigla are used in the critical edition of the Tangut text:

A: *Keypoints*, Tang.#inv. 345#2526

B: *Keypoints*, Tang.#inv. 345#824

I follow what is adopted in the numbered outline of the *Keypoints* in Chapter Four as outlining strategy.

Twofold scheme

Keypoints A: 5b1–16a7

Keypoints B: 5a3–14b5

2.2. Causal and resultant vehicles

2.2.1. General explanation (A: 5b1–4; B: 5a3–6)

經釋：維維維維維維維維維維，維維維維維維維維維維？

問曰：今時一切依因果二乘修道者，皆依此無念修行耶？

Question: Do all practitioners of this dual scheme of causal and resultant vehicles nowadays cultivate themselves on the basis of this non-conceptual practice?

經釋：維維維維維維維維維維，維維維維維維維維維維，維維維維維維維維維維；維維維維維維維維維維，維維維維維維維維維維。

答曰：夫依因果二乘修者，若各各區分人與所修道，則各有九品；其中，唯第八品人，依此修無念也。

Reply: If we are to differentiate practitioners of the dual scheme of causal and resultant vehicles in terms of individual proclivities and path stages, there are nine categories, among which the eighth one pertains to this non-conceptual practice.

2.2.1.1. Proclivity

2.2.1.1.1. Proclivities of disciples corresponding to the nine causal vehicle stages (A: 5b5–6a3; B: 5a6–b4)

頌辭：隨教隨，鋒鏃羶羶羶羶羶羶羶羶羶，羶羶羶？

問曰：既如是，乐信因乘者之九品根器，何所是？

Question: If so, how are the nine categories of proclivities for those inclined towards the causal vehicles?

頌辭：

羶羶羶羶羶羶羶， 羶羶羶羶羶羶羶，
羶羶羶羶羶羶羶， 羶羶羶羶羶羶羶，
羶羶羶羶羶羶羶， 羶羶羶羶羶羶羶，
羶羶羶羶羶羶羶， 羶羶羶羶羶羶羶，
羶羶羶羶羶羶羶， 羶羶羶羶羶羶羶。

頌答曰：

第一药树根器者，第二莲花根器者，
第三入隐根器者，第四香山根器者，
第五清月根器者，第六明日根器者，

第七舟船根器者，第八大海根器者，

第九虚空根器者，此修九因者名也。

Reply in verse:

The first is the proclivity of medicin tree, the second is the proclivity of pure flower (i.e., lotus),

The third is the proclivity of retreat, the fourth is the proclivity of fragrant mountain,

The fifth is the proclivity of pure moon, the sixth is the proclivity of glowing sun,

The seventh is the proclivity of ship, the eighth is the proclivity of great ocean,

And the ninth is the proclivity of empty sky: these are the names for the practitioners of nine causal vehicles.

2.2.1.1.2. Proclivities of disciples corresponding to the nine resultant vehicle stages (A: 6a4–b2; B: 5b5–6a2)

瓊髒：參蕪耗蕪輟彥孺瓊瓊瓊瓊，瓊瓊瓊？

问曰：乐信果乘者之九品根器，何所是？

Question: How are the nine categories of proclivities for those inclined towards the resultant vehicles?

翬翬翬：

玃玃玃玃玃玃玃， 梟玃玃玃玃玃玃玃，
玃玃玃玃玃玃玃， 玃玃玃玃玃玃玃，
玃玃玃玃玃玃玃， 玃玃玃玃玃玃玃，
玃玃玃玃玃玃玃， 玃玃玃玃玃玃玃，
玃玃玃玃玃玃玃， 玃玃玃玃玃玃玃。

颂答曰：

第一铁矿根器者， 第二黄铜根器者，
第三白银根器者， 第四真金根器者，
第五明玉根器者， 第六琉璃根器者，
第七金刚根器者， 第八摩尼根器者
第九山王根器者， 此修九果者名也。

Reply in verse:

The first is the proclivity of iron, the second is the proclivity of bronze,
The third is the proclivity of silver, the fourth is the proclivity of gold,
The fifth is the proclivity of jade, the sixth is the proclivity of glass,
The seventh is the proclivity of adamant, the eighth is the proclivity of jewel,
And the ninth is the proclivity of mountain king: these are the names for the practitioners
of nine resultant vehicles.

2.2.1.2. Path stages

2.2.1.2.1. The nine causal vehicle stages (A: 6b3–7a1; B: 6a3–9)

經曰：樂信因乘者之九品道，何所是？

問曰：樂信因乘者之九品道，何所是？

Question: How are the nine path stages for those inclined towards the causal vehicles?

經曰：

一、觀世音菩薩，二、觀世音菩薩，

三、觀世音菩薩，四、觀世音菩薩，

五、觀世音菩薩，六、觀世音菩薩，

七、觀世音菩薩，八、觀世音菩薩，

九、觀世音菩薩，十、觀世音菩薩。

頌答曰：

第一對治三業道，第二觀境微塵道，

第三觀識無常道，第四觀境無我道，

第五觀身無我道，第六觀識無我道，

第七觀法真空道，第八觀源無念道，

第九无知解脱道，此修九因道名也。

Reply in verse:

The first is the stage of the antidote to the karmic trio, the second is the stage of contemplating objective particle,

The third is the stage of contemplating subject as impermanent, the fourth is the stage of contemplating object as selfless,

The fifth is the stage of contemplating physical body as selfless, the sixth is the stage of contemplating consciousness as selfless,

The seventh is the stage of contemplating phenomena as empty, the eighth is the stage of contemplating the origin as non-conceptual,

The ninth is the stage of liberation through non-recognition: these are the names for the nine causal vehicle stages.

2.2.1.2.1. The nine resultant vehicle stages (A: 7a2–8; B: 6b1–7)

頌辭：從茲耗盡輟修而此報盡，觀發散？

問曰：樂信果乘者之九品道，何所是？

Question: How are the nine path stages for those inclined towards the resultant vehicles?

頌辭辭：

剋礙辨觀待無礙，稱礙盡而待觀礙，

散毘翳鬚絳毘毘，網毘泥蕪毘毘，
低毘毘緝毘毘，修毘毘蕪毘毘，
養毘毘蕪毘毘，與毘毘緝毘毘，
纒毘毘緝毘毘，緝毘毘緝毘毘。

頌答曰：

第一前观佛身道，第二观自身佛道，
第三观他身佛道，第四拙火喜乐道
第五明点明乐道，第六脉轮寂乐道，
第七究竟空乐道，第八无念戏乐道，
第九无知大乐道，此修九果道名也。

Reply in verse:

The first is the stage of contemplating the Buddha in front, the second is the stage of
contemplating oneself as the Buddha,

The third is the stage of contemplating the other as the Buddha, the fourth is the stage of
sensual bliss through *caṇḍālī*,

The fifth is the stage of luminous bliss through *bindu*, the sixth is the stage of tranquil
bliss through *nāḍī*,

The seventh is the stage of empty bliss of ultimacy, the eighth is the stage of bliss of
display through non-conceptuality,

The ninth is the stage of great bliss through non-recognition: these are the names for the nine resultant vehicle stages.

2.2.2. Specific explanation

2.2.2.1. Nine causal vehicle stages

2.2.2.1.1. Antidote to the karmic trio (A: 7b1–8a1; B: 6b8–7a8)

經釋： 猶彼羶糞穢穢， 剋離散散， 剋離散散， 剋離散散， 剋離散散？

問曰： 先樂信因乘者之九品道中， 第一對治三業道者， 何謂？

Question: First, among the nine stages for those inclined towards the causal vehicles, the first is the stage of the antidote to the karmic trio; how is it?

經釋： 此

猶彼羶糞， 剋離散散； 剋離散散， 剋離散散。

散散穢穢， 散散穢穢； 散散穢穢， 散散穢穢。

答曰： 夫

無明風動， 心海波浪滔滔； 迷識波起， 如幻蒙蒙昧昧。

三業放逸， 墮入三塗八難； 十惡禁絕， 趣向十地五位。

Reply:

The wind of ignorance (*avidyā, ma rig pa*) stirring, the waves of the mental ocean run high.

The bewildering consciousness being agitated, it is illusion-like and murky.

Indulged in the three *karmas*, one falls into the three destinies (i.e. three lower *gatis* including *nāraka, preta,* and *tiryak*) and eight difficulties.

Abstaining from the ten evil deeds, one is predisposed towards the ten stages (*daśabhūmi, sa bcu*) and five paths (*pañcamārga, lam lnga*). (CV 1a)

羸羸，

豸夂飛飛，駸駸馳驅繼繼；綴履養歸，緝綴誦訛摧莽。

貧窮飛飛，貧窮繼繼；散兀弱弱，散豸繼繼。

如是，

杂身口意，赏爵受用胜生；修戒定慧，决断罪罚伏死。

七火眩耀，以七甘露止熄；三毒狂暴，以三神药对治。

As such,

Mixing [activities in terms of] body, speech, and mind, one takes enjoyment in official post and fortune, which triumphs over life.

Cultivating oneself in [the trio of] discipline (*śīla, tshul khrims*), concentration (*samādhi, ting nge 'dzin*), and insight (*prajñā, shes rab*), one makes judgment about sins and punishments, which subdues death.

The seven flaring fires are extinguished via seven nectars.

The three violent poisons are counteracted via three divine medicines. (CV 1b)

新散散發發岫岫岫岫岫岫，岫岫岫岫、岫岫岫岫岫岫岫，岫岫岫岫岫岫岫：岫、岫、
岫岫岫岫岫岫岫。

故知晓对治三业者是见，随顺于见、诸恶禁绝则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、
定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the antidote to the karmic trio is the view, to accord with the view and to
abstain from evil deeds is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from being disoriented is
the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.1.2. Contemplating objective particle (A: 8a2–8b1; B: 7b1–8)

岫岫：岫岫岫岫岫岫岫，岫岫？

问曰：第二观境微尘道者，何谓？

Question: How is the second stage of contemplating objective particle?

岫岫：岫

岫岫岫岫，岫岫岫岫岫岫；岫岫岫岫，岫岫岫岫岫岫。

岫岫岫岫，岫岫岫岫岫岫；岫岫岫岫，岫岫岫岫岫岫。

答曰：夫

微尘体聚，七尘各各叠加；粗境相现，六境林林云集。

境胜智卑，生死相续轮回；智殊境弱，明证神功熠熠。

Reply:

Subatomic particles (*aṇu, rdul phra*) agglomerating, the seven types of objective sphere (i.e., six *viṣayas* plus *asaṃskṛta-dharma*) pile up on each other.

Signs (*nimitta, mtshan ma*) manifesting against the coarse objective spheres, the six objective sphere (*viṣaya, yul*) amalgamate in variegated forms.

When objective sphere prevails over gnostic knowledge (*jñāna, ye shes*), one becomes trapped in the *samsāric* continuum of birth and death.

When gnostic knowledge prevails objective sphere, one attains superknowledges (*abhijñā, mngon shes*) in vivid forms. (CV 2a)

纍纍，

纍纍纍纍，纍纍纍纍纍纍；纍纍纍纍，纍纍纍纍纍纍。

纍纍纍纍，纍纍纍纍纍纍；纍纍纍纍，纍纍纍纍纍纍。

如是，

黄金白银，赏心悦目绝弃；美女俊男，心中欢喜断除。

遮寒避暑，何惟执补衲衣；挡风蔽雨，何常草舍屋宅。

As such,

Gold and silver are all abandoned in spite of their pleasing appearances.

Affections for beautiful girls and boys are cut off.

How comes it that one holds exclusively on to the hundred-patch robe to keep away from coldness and heat?

How comes it that the thatched cottage exists there eternally to shelter one from wind and rain? (CV 2b)

新瓶新瓶新瓶新瓶新瓶新瓶，新瓶新瓶、新瓶新瓶新瓶新瓶，新瓶新瓶新瓶新瓶：新瓶、新瓶、
新瓶新瓶新瓶新瓶。

故知晓观境微尘者是见，随顺于见、出家寂止则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、
定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the contemplation of objective particle is the view, to accord with the view
and to quiescently abide in the monastic life is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from
being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the
concentration is the path.

2.2.2.1.3. Contemplating subject as impermanent (A: 8b2–9a1; B: 7b8–8a7)

新瓶：新瓶新瓶新瓶新瓶，新瓶？

问曰：第三观识无常道者，何谓？

Question: How is the third stage of contemplating subject as impermanent?

癡禪：崩

非逐散羣，愷繼而編羅縷；非罷憊摧，糝胤而散風散。

敏縱罷憊，矮敗設羣羣；縱罷愷愷，羣胤散羣結。

答曰：夫

生住异灭，成有为之共相；生老病死，是众生之自性。

人生匆匆，电光石火烈烈；富贵不定，车轮水泡跃跃。

Reply:

Origination (*jāti, skye ba*), continuance (*sthiti, gnas pa*), decay (*jarā, rga ba*), and extinction (*anityatā, mi rtag pa*) make the generic qualities (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa, spyi mtshan*) of the conditioned existence (*saṃskṛta-dharma, 'dus byas*).

Birth (*jāti, skye ba*), aging (*jarā, rga ba*), sickness (*vyādhi, na ba*), and death (*maraṇa, 'chi ba*) become the specific nature of sentient beings.

Life passes in lightening speed.

Wealth and rank are as illusory as the bubble under wheel. (CV 3a)

癡禪，

非繼縷縷，非繼縷縷；非繼縷縷，非繼縷縷。

非繼縷縷，非繼縷縷；非繼縷縷，非繼縷縷。

如是，

世间名利，岂及草上露水；出世善根，超越金刚山上。

背离千藏，宝库分予彼人；亲近一念，修善作我资具。

As such,

How can worldly fames and fortunes be compared even with the dew on grass?

The unworldly wholesome faculties (*kuśala-mūla, dge ba 'i rtsa ba*) are beyond the Adamant Mountain.

Turning his or her back on thousands of treasuries, one shares the valuables with people.

Approaching (*bhajana, bsnyen pa*) the one mind (*ekacitta?*), one cultivates the virtue as requisites (*pariṣkāra, yo byad*). (CV 3b)

新膳戮慨嫩岫毓纒毖毖毖，毖茲纒纒、纒纒纒纒纒纒纒，纒纒纒纒纒纒纒：纒、纒、
纒纒纒纒纒纒纒。

故知晓观识无常者是见，随顺于见、勤修诸善则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、
定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the contemplation of subject as impermanent is the view, to accord with
the view and to strive dilligently for virtuous deeds is the conduct, and to keep the
conduct from being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct,
and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.1.4. Contemplating object as selfless (A: 9a2–b2; B: 8a7–b7)

魏綦：綢綦綦綦綦綦綦，綦綦？

問曰：第四觀境無我道者，何謂？

Question: How is the fourth stage of contemplating object as selfless?

魏綦：綦

綦綦綦綦，綦綦綦綦綦綦；綦綦綦綦，綦綦綦綦綦綦？

綦綦綦綦，綦綦綦綦綦綦？綦綦綦綦，綦綦綦綦綦綦。

答曰：夫

六塵幻化，不遵彼我是非；十方虛妄，何法彼此去來？

取境成我，何異白螺黃見？依性說人，不勝樹棘邪見。

The six objective spheres miraculously manifesting, one does not distinguish self and other, right and wrong.

All ten directions being deceptive, what is a need to follow this and that, that which comes and goes?

An apprehension of object as self is nothing different than viewing white condor as yellow.

An explanation of personhood based on an essentialist notion is no better than the thorny-like perverted view. (CV 4a)

羸羸，

羸羸羸羸，羸羸羸羸；羸羸羸羸，羸羸羸羸。

羸羸羸羸，羸羸羸羸；羸羸羸羸，羸羸羸羸。

如是，

此虽出家，起而劳作活业；于彼屋宅，岂应开土凿石？

修房筑塔，我执不加增益；讲经释论，道心免于沦陷。

As such,

Although living a monastic life, one works laboriously for livelihood.

In that house, should one not dig and carve?

Through building houses and stūpas, one's egoistic attachment does not proliferate.

By teaching sūtras and explicating treatises, one's aspiration for the path does not lapse.

(CV 4b)

羸羸羸羸羸羸羸羸，羸羸羸羸、羸羸羸羸羸羸羸，羸羸羸羸羸羸羸：羸、羸、

羸羸羸羸羸羸羸。

故知晓观境无我者是见，随顺于见、不着于境则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the contemplation of object as selfless is the view, to accord with the view and to avoid attachment to object is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from being

disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.1.5. Contemplating physical body as selfless (A: 9b3–10a2; B: 8b7–9a7)

疑辭： 廐雛豸毳雛媚穢穢， 彘雛？

問曰： 第五觀身無我道者， 何謂？

Question: How is the fifth stage of contemplating physical body as selfless?

疑辭： 廐

雛豸穢穢， 彘雛穢穢； 穢雛穢穢， 穢雛穢穢。

穢雛穢穢， 彘雛穢穢； 穢雛穢穢， 穢雛穢穢。

答曰： 夫

色身本體， 彼之不清如如； 族姓名字， 以妄妙語真真。

抬首求索， 人相與兔角俱； 遍足根莖， 我體與花雨同。

Reply:

The substance of physical body (*rūpa-kāya*, *gzugs sku*) is suchness (*tathatā*, *de bzhin nyid*) of that which is impure.

Names and designations reveal the authenticity of wondrous words via illusoriness.

Looking up for a quest, one identifies the characteristic of a person with the horns of a rabbit.

Setting foot on the root and stem, one equates the embodiment of self with the flower rain.

(CV 5a)

羸羸，

惛惛羸羸，羸羸惛惛；羸羸惛惛，惛惛羸羸。

惛惛羸羸，羸羸惛惛；惛惛羸羸，羸羸惛惛。

如是，

念念观身，不耽身体是我；常常缘我，无著我相是身。

有名有体，身是依他起性；有名无体，我是遍计执性。

As such,

Contemplating on the physical body in every thought-moment, one does not adhere to the corporeal substance as the self.

Constantly apprehending on the self, one does not adhere to the egoistic appearance as the physical body.

Possessed of name and substance, the physical body is of the dependent nature

(*paratantra, gzhan dbang*).

Possessed of name and free from substance, the self is of the imagined nature (*parikalpita,*

kun btags). (CV 5b)

新新觀維順惟維觀觀，觀茲觀觀、新觀觀觀觀觀，觀觀觀觀觀觀：觀、觀、
觀觀觀觀觀觀。

故知曉觀身無我者是見，隨順于見、不着于身則是行，行不散亂即是定：見、行、
定三平等則是道。

Thus, to know the contemplation of physical body as selfless is the view, to accord with
the view and to avoid attachment to physical body is the conduct, and to keep the conduct
from being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the
concentration is the path.

2.2.2.1.6. Contemplating consciousness as selfless (A: 10a3–b2; B: 9a8–b6)

維觀：維觀觀觀觀觀，觀觀？

問曰：第六觀識無我道者，何謂？

Question: How is the sixth stage of contemplating consciousness as selfless?

維觀：觀

觀觀觀觀，觀觀觀觀觀觀；觀觀觀觀，觀觀觀觀觀觀。

觀觀觀觀，觀觀觀觀觀觀；觀觀觀觀，觀觀觀觀觀觀。

答曰：夫

依境起识，识体念念生灭；以识执我，我相相续轮回。

有因有缘，识是世俗真实；无根无本，境为世俗颠倒。

Reply:

The generation of consciousness depending on objective sphere, the consciousness arises and ceases in every single thought-moment.

One adhering to a self in consciousness, the egoistic appearance continues through *saṃsāra*.

Conditioned by causality, consciousness is the correct conventional truth (*tathya-saṃvṛti*, *yang dag pa'i kun rdzob*).

Baseless and rootless, object is the perverted conventional truth (*mithya-saṃvṛti*, *log pa'i kun rdzob*). (CV 6a)

纒纒，

𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳，𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳；𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳，𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳。

𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳，𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳；𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳，𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳𦉳。

如是，

以智观识，识相则是幻术；以慧察我，我体实虚妄也。

心心念念，念者我相无本；作作行行，行者心体无根。

As such,

Question: How is the seventh stage of contemplating phenomena as empty?

翳影：影

翳影翳影，翳影翳影翳影；翳影翳影，翳影翳影翳影。

翳影翳影，翳影翳影翳影；翳影翳影，翳影翳影翳影。

答曰：夫

有者即空，有空无二妙有；空者即有，空有不异真空。

真空寂寂，一味无生无灭；妙有明照，万相如幻如化。

Reply:

Existence being empty, the non-duality (*advaya, gnyis su med pa*) of existence and emptiness is marvelous existence.

Emptiness being existent, the non-differentiation of emptiness and existence is true emptiness.

The true emptiness tranquilizing, there is neither arising nor ceasing in one-taste (*ekarasa, ro gcig pa*).

Marvelous existence illuminating, the variegated signs are miraculously transformed like illusions. (CV 7a)

翳影，

翳影翳影，翳影翳影翳影；翳影翳影，翳影翳影翳影。

散養昇楸，網死翫循翫散；泥乘蠶蠹，散灑釋灑翫覆。

如是，

诸相虚妄，不着破相无相；诸想迷乱，不作去想无想。

乘智慧舟，翻越四边江海；执慈悲钩，救渡三界龟鯢。

As such,

All signs being deceptive, one neither adheres to the sign-refuting notion (i.e., Madhyamaka) nor the signlessness (*ānimitta*, *mtshan ma med pa*).

All thoughts being deluded, one neither engage with the elimination of thoughts nor thoughtlessness (*asamjñā*, *'du shes med pa*).

Riding on the boat of insight (*prajñā*, *shes rab*), one travels across the ocean of four extremes (*catuṣkoṭi*, *mu bzhi*).

Holding the hook of compassion (*karuṇā*, *snying rje*), one saves the turtles and fishes of the three realms (*traidhātuka*, *kham s gsum*). (CV 7b)

翫視翫翫翫翫翫翫翫，翫茲翫翫、翫循翫循翫翫翫，翫慨翫編翫愜翫：翫、翫、
愜翫翫茲翫翫翫。

故知晓观法真空者是见，随顺于见、无着无染则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the contemplation of phenomena as empty is the view, to accord with the view and to be free from attachment and stains is the conduct, and to keep the conduct

from being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.1.8. Contemplating the origin as non-conceptual (A: 11a3–b2; B: 10a7–b5)

經釋：奧礙穉戮懈頌穉穉，穉穉？

問曰：第八觀源無念道者，何謂？

Question: How is the eight stage of contemplating the origin as non-conceptual?

經釋：崩

穉穉穉穉，穉穉穉穉穉穉；穉穉穉穉，穉穉穉穉穉穉？

穉穉穉穉，穉穉穉穉穉穉；穉穉穉穉，穉穉穉穉穉穉。

答曰：夫

真心寂寂，四相不能搖動；覺性明明，三世何能轉變？

念念無念，順彼念念菩提；念念動念，順彼念念煩惱。

Reply:

The true mind is tranquil and can not be moved by the four marks [of conditioned existence] (*caturlakṣaṇa, mtshan nyid bzhi*).

The awakened nature is luminous; how can three times (*triṣkāla, dus gsum*) transform it?

Non-conceptuality (*nirvikalpa, rnam par rtog pa med pa*) in every thought-moment is awakening (*bodhi, byang chub*).

Conceptual agitation in every thought-moment is affliction (*kleṣa, nyon mongs*). (CV 8a)

耗穢，

惛惛兀兀， 姍姍纒纒； 姍姍纒纒， 惛惛兀兀。

兀兀纒纒， 纒纒惛惛； 姍姍惛惛， 惛惛纒纒。

如是，

念念寂寂， 心心妙妙明明； 心心妙妙， 念念空空寂寂。

寂寂妙妙， 妙性归还于本； 心心念念， 无念趣向于源。

As such,

Every thought-moment being tranquil, the mind is marvelous and luminous.

The mind being marvelous, every thought-moment is empty and tranquil.

Being tranquil and marvelous, the marvelous nature returns to the root.

Being mindful in every thought-moment, the non-conceptual mind retreats to the origin.

(CV 8b)

麤穢惛惛， 惛惛兀兀； 惛惛兀兀， 惛惛穢穢； 惛惛穢穢， 惛惛兀兀。

惛惛兀兀， 惛惛穢穢。

故知晓观源无念者是见， 随顺于见、常令心闲则是行， 行不散乱即是定：见、行、

定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the contemplation of the origin as non-conceptual is the view, to accord with the view and to sustain a relaxed mind is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.1.9. Liberation through non-cognition (A: 11b3–12a2; B: 10b6–11a4)

魏影： 𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎， 𠄎𠄎？

问曰： 第九无知解脱道者， 何谓？

Question: How is the ninth stage of liberating through non-cognition?

魏影： 𠄎

𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎， 𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎； 𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎， 𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎。

𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎， 𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎； 𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎， 𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎𠄎。

答曰： 夫

念虽已无， 知无念即念也； 知虽已无， 知无知即知也。

念而舍本， 渐渐惑真执妄； 知而忘源， 尤其离觉和尘。

Reply:

As much as the conceptuality has ceased, the knowledge of non-conceptuality is conceptuality.

As much as the cognition has ceased, the knowledge of non-cognition is cognition.

Abandoning the root on account of conceptuality, one is gradually diverted from truth and holds onto illusions.

Forgetting the origin on account of cognition, one especially deviates from the awakening and engages the objective sphere. (CV 9a)

羴羴，

羴羴羴羴，羴羴羴羴羴羴；羴羴羴羴，羴羴羴羴羴羴。

羴羴羴羴，羴羴羴羴羴羴；羴羴羴羴，羴羴羴羴羴羴。

如是，

念念无念，无念不察无念；心心无知，无知不悟无知。

无念则实，有知无念则幻；无知则真，有知无知则妄。

As such,

The thought-moment being non-conceptual, non-conceptuality does not perceive non-conceptuality itself.

The mind being non-cognizing, non-cognition does not realize non-cognition itself.

Non-conceptuality is reality, whereas the knowledge of non-conceptuality is illusory.

Non-cognition is truth, whereas the knowledge of non-cognition is deluded. (CV 9b)

羴羴羴羴羴羴羴羴，羴羴羴羴、羴羴羴羴羴羴羴，羴羴羴羴羴羴羴：羴、羴、

羴羴羴羴羴羴羴。

故知晓无知解脱者是见，随顺于见、不住于知则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the liberation through non-cognition is the view, to accord with the view and to avoid abiding in the cognition is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.2. Nine resultant vehicle stages

2.2.2.2.1. Contemplating the Buddha in front (A: 12a3–b3; B: 11a5–b3)

鳩摩：後樂信果乘者之九品道中，第一前觀佛身道者，何謂？

問曰：後樂信果乘者之九品道中，第一前觀佛身道者，何謂？

Question: Later, among the nine stages for those inclined towards the resultant vehicles, the first is the stage of contemplating the Buddha in front; how is it?

鳩摩：此

後樂信果乘者，第一前觀佛身道者；後樂信果乘者，第一前觀佛身道者。

後樂信果乘者，第一前觀佛身道者；後樂信果乘者，第一前觀佛身道者。

答曰：夫

世間屋宅，是六道之苦器；出世道場，成五位之乐界。

亲者围绕，悲恸热恼烦乱；贤者会众，欢喜戏乐寂寂。

Reply:

The inanimate world (*bhājanaloka*, *snod kyi 'jig rten*) is the container of suffering which characterizes the six realms (*ṣaḍgati*, *'gro ba rigs drug*).

The unworldly platform of awakening (*bodhi-maṇḍa*, *byang chub kyi snying po*) becomes the realm of bliss for the five paths (*pañcamārga*, *lam lnga*).

Surrounded by relatives, one suffers from agony, discontent, and chaos.

Circled by savants, one partakes of bliss and serenity. (RV 1a)

羸羸，

死耗震駭， 羸羸羸羸羸羸； 頌駭憊羸， 羸羸羸羸羸羸。

羸羸羸羸， 羸羸羸羸羸羸； 憊羸羸羸， 羸羸羸羸羸羸。

如是，

开土凿石，烦恼火宅止息；诵咒观想，菩提道场神变。

与心相爱，舍离各各眷属；随顺于定，观想明明佛身。

As such,

The believer digging [the stone] and carving [the Buddhist statues], the afflictions ignited by the burning house (*adīptāgāra*, *rab tu 'bar ba 'i kham pa*) die down.

The practitioner reciting and contemplating, miraculous transformations (*vikurvaṇa*, *rnam par 'phrul pa*) are displayed in the platform of awakening.

With a predilection for the mind, one leaves the retinue behind.

In accordance with the concentration, one contemplates on the *buddha*'s body
(*buddhakāya*, *sangs rgyas sku*) vividly. (RV 1b)

新辨觀待前佛身觀，觀茲觀、辨茲辨、觀茲觀、觀茲觀：觀、觀、
觀茲觀茲觀茲觀。

故知前观佛身者是见，随顺于见、观佛现前则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、
定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the contemplation of the Buddha in front is the view, to accord with the
view and to contemplate the Buddha manifest in front is the conduct, and to keep the
conduct from being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct,
and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.2.2. Contemplating oneself as the Buddha (A: 12b4–13a3; B: 11b4–12a2)

觀觀：觀茲觀茲觀茲觀，觀觀？

問曰：第二观自身佛道者，何謂？

Question: How is the second stage of contemplating oneself as the Buddha?

𦉑𦉑：𦉑

𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑，𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑；𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑，𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑。

𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑，𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑；𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑，𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑。

答曰：夫

亲戚眷属，此岸生死之本；中围佛众，彼岸涅槃之根。

族姓名字，世世身心烦杂；色身手印，劫劫随意戏乐。

Reply:

Family and retinue characterize the base of birth and death (i.e., *samsāra*) on this shore (*apāraṃ, tshu rol gyi 'gram*).

The assembly of *buddhas* in the *maṇḍala* is the root of *nirvāṇa* on the other shore (*pāraṃ, pha rol gyi 'gram*).

Names and designations inflict sufferings on the psycho-physiological complex one life after another.

Hand gestures (*mudrā, phya rgya*) made via the physical body exhibit the playfulness at will through eons (*kalpa, bskal pa*). (RV 2a)

𦉑𦉑，

𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑，𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑；𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑，𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑。

𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑，𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑；𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑，𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑𦉑。

如是，

有生有灭，变血肉凡身相；无生无灭，成金刚佛身体。

凡思凡身，念念相续息止；佛念佛身，心心显耀照明。

As such,

Being born and dead, one transforms into the mundane body of blood and flesh.

Free from birth and death, one accomplishes the body of Vajra-Buddha.

The continuum of thought-moments in the mundane psycho-physiological complex ceases.

The mind in the awakened psycho-physiological complex become luminous and shines forth lights. (RV 2b)

新新新新新新新新新新，新新新新、新新新新新新，新新新新新新：新、新、
新新新新新新。

故知晓观自身佛者是见，随顺于见、起佛身慢则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、
定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the contemplation of oneself as the Buddha is the view, to accord with the view and to generate the divine pride (*māna, nga rgyal*) is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.2.3. Contemplating the other as the Buddha (A: 13a4–13b3; B: 12a3–b1)

疑釋：散離羣衆，徒觀穢處，無解？

問曰：第三觀他身佛道者，何謂？

Question: How is the third stage of contemplating the other as the Buddha?

疑釋：此

淨求淨，顯諸佛之共法；以穢求淨，照我佛之別印。

散亂羣衆，散離羣衆；徒觀穢處，徒觀穢處。

答曰：夫

以淨求淨，顯諸佛之共法；以穢求淨，照我佛之別印。

三毒作藥，三界淪陷無本；五欲為道，五趣輪回無根。

Reply:

The pursuit of purity by means of the pure reveals the common teachings of all *buddhas*.

The pursuit of purity by means of the impure sheds light on the distinct seal of the Buddha.

One taking the three poisons (*triviṣa, dug gsum*) as the antidote, the three realms subside as baseless.

One taking the five desires (*pañca-kāmaḡaṇa, 'dod yon sna lnga*) as the path, the five destinies of *samsāra* become rootless. (RV 3a)

纒瓏，

纒纒纒瓏，纒纒纒瓏纒瓏；纒纒纒瓏，纒纒纒瓏纒瓏。

纒纒纒瓏纒瓏，纒纒纒瓏；纒纒纒瓏纒瓏，纒纒纒瓏。

如是，

变幻自身，勇父哈哈游戏；摄受他身，勇母稀奇专注。

四喜四乐等生，觉知大乐；五肉五药本净，受用良药。

As such,

Self-transforming, the *dāka* plays and sports, exhaling “Haha.”

Taking delight in the other’s body, one attends to the marvelous *dākiṇī*.

Four joys and four blisses arising equally, one experientially realizes the great bliss.

Five fleshs and five medicines being intrinsically pure, one partakes of the good medicine. (RV 3b)

纒纒纒瓏纒瓏纒瓏纒瓏，纒纒纒瓏、纒纒纒瓏纒瓏纒瓏，纒纒纒瓏纒瓏纒瓏纒瓏：纒、纒、

纒纒纒瓏纒瓏纒瓏。

故知晓观他身佛者是见，随顺于见、无疑惑心则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the contemplation of the other as the Buddha is the view, to accord with the view and to abstain from doubt is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from being

disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.2.4. Sensual bliss through psychic heat (A: 13b4–14a3; B: 12b1–6)

經曰：網礙泥藁嬰霽穢穢，焮礙？

問曰：第四拙火喜樂道者，何謂？

Question: How is the fourth stage of sensual bliss through psychic heat (*caṇḍālī, gtummo*)?

經曰：焮

鋪藁藁藁，焮礙礙礙礙礙；焮礙藁藁，礙藁藁藁藁藁。

礙礙藁藁，藁藁藁藁藁藁；藁藁藁藁，藁藁藁藁藁藁？

答曰：夫

下火炎炎，能滅百病苦惱；上藥滔滔，能起萬樂神功。

轉老成少，形容日月企及；易短作長，壽命天地焉匹？

Reply:

The fire blazing up from the bottom extinguishes all diseases and afflictions.

The nectar (i.e., *bindu*) melting down from the top stimulates the attainment of superknowledge.

The old being transformed into the young, one's complexion and vitality is beyond the sun and moon.

The short being elongated, one's life span exceeds that of the universe. (RV 4a)

羸羸，

解解羸羸，羸羸解解羸羸；羸羸解解，羸羸羸羸羸羸。

羸羸羸羸，羸羸羸羸羸羸；羸羸羸羸，羸羸羸羸羸羸。

如是，

观脐中焰，炎炎至顶焚轮；察顶中流，滔滔遍足盈药。

乐报法化，四轮成坏自足；喜上增等，四乐顺逆无碍。

As such,

One contemplating the fire in the navel, it goes up to the crown and burns the wheel (*cakra*, 'khor lo) there.

One observing the nectar dripping down from the crown, it permeates the whole body through the feet.

The four wheels – namely the wheel of great bliss (*mahāsukhacakra*, *bde chen gyi 'khor lo*), of enjoyment (*sambhogacakra*, *longs spyod kyi 'khor lo*), of the truth (*dharmacakra*, *chos kyi 'khor lo*), and of emanation (*nirmāṇacakra*, *sprul pa'i 'khor lo*) – operate in a self-contained manner, whether consummate or disintegrated.

The four blisses – namely joy (*ānanda*, *dga' ba*), supreme joy (*paramānanda*, *mchog dga'*), extraordinary joy (*viramānanda*, *khyad dga'*), and co-emergent joy (*sahajānanda*, *lhan cig skyes dga'*) – descend (*yas bab*) and ascend (*mas brtan*) without obscurations.

(RV 4b)

新泥糞嬰羈岫緝纒毘毘，毘茲纒纒、絳熾嬰羈絳羈毘，羈慨毘緝羈毘：毘、羈、
毘毘羈絳羈毘。

故知晓拙火喜乐者是见，随顺于见、心常喜乐则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、
定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the sensual bliss through *caṇḍālī* is the view, to accord with the view and
to sustain the sensual bliss in the mind is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from being
disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the
concentration is the path.

2.2.2.2.5. Luminous bliss through seminal nuclei (A: 14a4–b3; B: 12b7–13a5)

羈羈：羈毘緝緝羈羈，羈羈？

问曰：第五明点明乐道者，何谓？

Question: How is the fifth stage of luminous bliss through seminal nuclei (*bindu*, *thig le*)?

翬翬：甗

翬翬翬翬，翬翬翬翬翬翬；翬翬翬翬，翬翬翬翬翬翬。

翬翬翬翬，翬翬翬翬翬翬；翬翬翬翬，翬翬翬翬翬翬。

答曰：夫

集粗入细，尘土混入微尘；依细去粗，微尘至于尘土。

去众明一，用以破相明性；去一明众，用以隐性现相。

Reply:

The coarse dissolving into the subtle, dust and dirt submerges into subatomic particles (*paramāṇu, rdul phra rab*).

The coarse issuing from the subtle, one visualizes that subatomic particles transform into dust and dirt.

Dissolving multifoldness (*sna tshogs*) into singleness (*gcig bu*), one deconstructs the appearance and illuminates the nature.

Multifoldedness issuing from singleness, one eclipses the nature and manifests the appearance. (RV 5a)

翬翬，

翬翬翬翬，翬翬翬翬翬翬；翬翬翬翬，翬翬翬翬翬翬。

翬翬翬翬，翬翬翬翬翬翬；翬翬翬翬，翬翬翬翬翬翬。

如是，

摄末入根，明点显显了了；依根去末，佛身明明熠熠。

隐现无碍，粗细易换互入；禁达自在，相性圆融平等。

As such,

The twigs dissolving into the root, the nucleus becomes lucid.

The twigs issuing from the root, the *buddha*'s body appears vividly.

Dissolving and issuing without obscurations, the coarse and subtle are interchangeable and interpenetrating.

Concealing and manifesting freely, appearance and nature display perfect interfusion and unanimity. (RV 5b)

新誕緝 羈岫維維嚴瓏嚴，嚴茲瓏瓏、緝嫩徬羈絳瓏嚴，瓏慨嚴緝羈嚴：嚴、瓏、
嚴嚴瓏嚴絳嚴嚴。

故知晓明点明乐者是见，随顺于见、心常明乐则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、
定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the luminous bliss through *bindu* is the view, to accord with the view and
to sustain the luminous bliss in the mind is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from
being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the
concentration is the path.

2.2.2.2.6. Tranquil bliss through *nāḍī* (A: 14b4–15a3; B: 13a5–b3)

疑辭：修修訖訖，寂樂道者，何謂？

問曰：第六脉輪寂樂道者，何謂？

Question: How is the sixth stage of tranquil bliss through *nāḍī*?

疑辭：疑

疑疑疑疑，疑疑疑疑；疑疑疑疑，疑疑疑疑。

疑疑疑疑，疑疑疑疑；疑疑疑疑，疑疑疑疑。

答曰：夫

如精如无，毛尖蒙蒙昧昧；如无如精，佛身明明显现。

体性蒙蒙，万染烦障消融；功相显显，万净神变兴起。

Reply:

As subtle as non-existent, the hair tip appears vague and dim.

As non-existent as subtle, the *buddha*'s body appears vividly.

The essence being vague and dim, the multitude of afflictions dissolve.

The function (*prayojana, dgos pa*) being manifest, the thousand-purity miraculous transformations arise. (RV 6a)

疑疑，

疑疑疑疑，疑疑疑疑；疑疑疑疑，疑疑疑疑。

氤氲穉穉，穉穉氤氲；幻相离于，明明显显。

如是，

明明显显，明点离于幻相；蒙蒙昧昧，脉轮和于实体。

万相归源，蒙蒙昧昧独寂；事出一性，明明显显众熠。

As such,

Vivid and manifest, the nuclei is separate from illusory signs.

Dissolving into nebulousness, the channels (*nāḍī, rtsa*) merge with reality.

All signs retreating to the origin, it enjoys solitude in nebulousness.

All matters deriving from the single nature, it shines forth vivid and manifest. (RV 6b)

氤氲穉穉，穉穉氤氲；幻相离于，明明显显。蒙蒙昧昧，脉轮和于实体。万相归源，蒙蒙昧昧独寂；事出一性，明明显显众熠。

故知晓脉轮寂乐者是见，随顺于见、心常寂乐则是行，行不散乱即是定：见、行、定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the tranquil bliss through *nāḍī* is the view, to accord with the view and to sustain the tranquil bliss in the mind is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from being disoriented is the concentration: a unanimity of the view, the conduct, and the concentration is the path.

2.2.2.2.7. Empty bliss of ultimacy (A: 15a4–b3; B: 13b4–14a3)

魏程：黃離變發靈靈靈靈，靈靈？

問曰：第七究竟空樂道者，何謂？

Question: How is the seventh stage of empty bliss of ultimacy?

魏程：此

發靈靈靈，靈靈靈靈靈靈；靈靈靈靈，靈靈靈靈靈靈。

靈靈靈靈，靈靈靈靈靈靈；靈靈靈靈，靈靈靈靈靈靈。

答曰：夫

熾盛色形，能顯報化是本；究竟空樂，能證法身為根。

佛身道場，法界盡皆周遍；真空大樂，未來永世綿延。

Reply:

Effulgent in color and shape, the ability to manifest the enjoyment and emanation bodies is the base.

Ultimately empty and blissful, the ability to realize the truth body is the root.

The *buddha*'s body which is taken as the platform of awakening pervades the entire reality realm (*dharmadhātu, chos kyi dbyings*).

The true emptiness characteristic of the great bliss continues unbroken into the future.

(RV 7a)

羸羸，

烟甗甗甗， 羸羸羸羸甗甗； 甗甗甗甗， 甗甗甗甗甗甗。

羸羸羸羸， 羸羸羸羸甗甗； 羸羸羸羸， 羸羸羸羸甗甗。

如是，

超越四相， 至上空乐寂寂； 五相显现， 广大神功重重。

住欲无欲， 欲欲大乐游戏； 住尘无尘， 尘尘佛众道场。

As such,

Transcending the four marks of conditioned existence, the empty bliss of ultimacy is tranquil.

Five awakened marks appearing, one is surrounded by extensive superknowledges.

Engaging with desires or not, within the sensual desire one plays with the great bliss.

Whether one apprehends on object or not, the objective sphere is the assembly of *buddhas* that is the platform of awakening. (RV 7b)

羸羸羸羸甗甗， 羸羸羸羸甗甗， 羸羸羸羸甗甗， 羸羸羸羸甗甗： 羸、羸、
羸羸羸羸甗甗。

故知晓究竟空乐者是见， 随顺于见、心常空乐则是行， 行不散乱即是定： 见、行、
定三平等则是道。

Thus, to know the empty bliss of ultimacy is the view, to accord with the view and to sustain the empty bliss in the mind is the conduct, and to keep the conduct from being

辨形：辨彼羶耗羶輶彥變，履緩收救列蔭翳翬，輶剋憚媚譏効；俛終羶耗羶輶彥變，
履緩收救列蔭翳翬，憚媚憚翳譏効。

答曰：彼乐信因乘者，离五欲而和顺一真，观源无念道也；此乐信果乘者，合五欲而依随一真，无念戏乐道也。

Reply: Those inclined towards the causal vehicles disengage themselves from the five sensual desires to accord with reality, which is the stage of “contemplating the origin as non-conceptual;” these inclined towards the resultant vehicles engage themselves with the five sensual desires to accord with reality, which is the stage of “bliss of display through non-conceptuality.” (RV 8a)

羶翬，履緩收派，譏輶輶終列蔭翳翬，憚媚剋救，頌 “歲剋輶譏剋輶輶，
輶輶輶輶輶輶輶” 輶救。

如是，离合五欲，情性虽异而和顺一真，同无念也，如 “世僧俗道同引导，随顺情性饮白津” 也。

As such, whether one disengages or engages with the five sensual desires, it is only a matter of different predispositions; both ways accord with reality and are identical with non-conceptuality. It is just like “With both the monastic and household paths led equally, one drinks the nectar in accordance with his or her personal predisposition.” (RV 8b)

2.2.2.2.9. Great bliss through non-cognition (A: 16a4–7; B: 14b2–5)

經釋：此經中，何處有，何處？

問曰：第九無知大樂道者，何謂？

Question: How is the ninth stage of great bliss through non-cognition?

經釋：此經中，何處有，何處？

答曰：與先樂信因乘者之九品道中第九無知解脫道同修也。

Reply: Its practice is identical with that of the ninth stage of liberating through non-cognition, which is among the nine stages for those inclined towards the causal vehicles.

經釋：此經中，何處有，何處？

問曰：雖同，則何故彼此道名不同？

Question: Although the two are identical with each other in terms of practice, why do they have different stage names?

經釋：此經中，何處有，何處？

答曰：此問之答者，應依前例知。

Reply: The answer to this question is to be known based on the previous example set in the eighth resultant vehicle. (RV 9)

Appendix II

Tangut Text, Chinese Transliteration, and English Translation:

Extracts from the *Notes on the Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate*

(鞞鞞嫩糝菽祕籍 *大印究竟要集记)

Introductory remarks

This part contains the Tangut text, Chinese transliteration, and English translation of the “Mahāyāna doxography” extracted from the *Notes on the Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate*. The *doxography* serves as the *Notes* commentary on the *Keypoints*’s listing of Śākyamuni’s four consecutive teachings: “both object and consciousness exist,” “both object and consciousness are empty,” “object dissolves and consciousness remains,” and “one returns to the source [of the mind].” Right after commenting on the first teaching “both object and consciousness exist,” the *Notes* turns to a “reasoning,” explaining why the order between the second “both object and consciousness are empty” and the third “object dissolves and consciousness remains” as listed in the *Keypoints* are now reversed in the commentary. After the *reasoning*, the *Notes* proceeds to comment on “object dissolves and consciousness remains,” “both object and consciousness are empty,” and “one returns to the source [of the mind]” consecutively. In order to keep the flow of doxographic expositions, I take the *reasoning* off the doxography and treat it separately in an independent section.

The *doxography* – together with the inserted *reasoning* – is contained in the first volume of the *Notes*, which exists in three recensions: Tang.#inv. 345#2858 (manuscript,

22 folios), Tang.#inv. 345#7163 (manuscript, 34 folios), and Tang.#inv. 427#3817 (manuscript, the first 29 folios on verso). For my critical edition, I use Tang.#inv. 345#2858 and Tang.#inv. 345#7163 (manuscript, 34 folios). The following sigla are used in the critical edition of the Tangut text:

A: *Notes I*, Tang.#inv. 345#2858

B: *Notes I*, Tang.#inv. 345#7163

The page and line number (e.g. A: 8b3) is placed where the line in the original manuscript the number marks starts. In addition, the numbering of the text in Arabic numerals with section titles (e.g. 1.1.2.2. Paramārtha-satya) is mine and employed to outline the structure of the work.

Doxography

Notes A: 8b2–9b4, 10b2–12b5

Notes B: 12a4–14a1, 15a6–19a1

1. Both object and consciousness exist

“*纒效訖牒櫛飛*” 纒纒:

毘特鋒嶽綺岫 (B: 12a5) 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 舜 (A: 8b3) 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫,
 綺岫 (B: 12a6) 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, (A: 8b4) 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫 (B:
 12b1) 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫. (A: 8b5) 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫 (B:12b2)
 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫 (A: 8b6) 毘特鋒嶽綺岫.

毘特 (B:12b3) 毘特鋒嶽綺岫, 毘特鋒嶽綺岫、毘特鋒嶽綺岫、毘特鋒嶽綺岫.

“先解境识二有”者：

诸佛如来知足天降下界，趣悲勤修六度，诸结皆断，穷尽业障，菩提树下成正等觉，以大愿力令诸众生远离烦恼，能超三界，观各别别根性。所度人中，见有能以承许境有识有而令其解脱者故，先向彼人说境识二有。若于此作分别，则应以见、行、定三法解说。

Quote “He first explained that both object and consciousness exist:”

The *buddhas* and *tathagatas* descended from the Tuṣita Heaven, strived for the six *pāramitās* with compassion, cut off the afflictive bonds and exhausted the karmic obstructions, and achieved perfect awakening under the Bodhi Tree. In order to lead the sentient beings out of afflictions and beyond the three realms with the power of great vows, they observed the spiritual capacities of each individuals. Among the sentient beings whom they intended to deliver, they saw the possibility that people can be delivered through the assertion that both object and consciousness exist. Thus they first taught to those people that both object and consciousness exist. If one is to analyze this teaching, it ought to be explained in terms of view, conduct, and concentration.

遍计者，外道执五蕴无我体为实有，此属小乘行人之遍计。

As for the imputed nature, non-Buddhists adhere to the substantial existence of the five-aggregate collection which lacks a self. This counts as the imputed nature for Hīnayānist.

1.1.1.2. Paratantra-svabhāva

毘婆沙，（A: 9a2）毘婆沙論，毘婆沙論， “毘婆沙（B: 13a2）論” 等。

毘婆沙論（A: 9a3）等， “毘婆沙論，毘婆沙論，毘婆沙論，毘婆沙論（B: 13a3）等，

毘婆沙論，毘婆沙論” 等。（A: 9a4）毘婆沙論，毘婆沙論，毘婆沙論，毘婆沙論（B: 13a4）等。

依他者，一切诸法悉依微尘生，不依心起，所谓“心外法”。及五蕴中识者，“无始中生，至于今时，劫劫相续，念念刹那，生复继灭，续未尝断。”境与识等依他性也，许为实有。

As for the dependent nature, all the phenomena arise in dependence on atoms (*aṇu, rdul phra mo*), not on the mind, which is called “the *dharma* external to the mind.”

Furthermore, the consciousness within five aggregates “has arisen since the beginningless time till now, lasted through *kalpas* as a continuum of thought moments (*kṣaṇa, skad cig*), and never breaks off through its rise and cessation.” This is the dependent nature of object and consciousness, which are thus asserted as substantially existent.

1.1.1.3. Parinīspanna-svabhāva

毘婆沙，毘婆沙論。

圆成者，了悟人无我。

The consummate nature constitutes the knowledge about selflessness in the person.

1.1.2. Satyadvaya

梟，僉僉、(A: 9a5) 禪縹梟僉僉：

二，世俗、胜义二谛者：

Second, as for the two truths of the conventional and the ultimate:

1.1.2.1. Samvrti-satya

僉收 (B: 13a5) 僉僉僉僉僉，僉僉僉僉僉僉，僉僉僉 (A: 9a6) 僉僉僉，僉僉僉 (B: 13a6) 僉僉僉。

外道之我见，于小乘行人而言是遍计，无中执有故也，此属世俗谛。

The Hīnayānist holds as imputed the non-Buddhist assertion on a self, since it considers as existent what does not exist. This counts as the conventional truth.

1.1.2.2. Paramārtha-satya

僉僉僉僉僉僉僉僉僉。僉僉僉 (A: 9a7) 僉僉 (B: 13b1) 僉僉僉僉僉僉，

僉僉僉僉僉僉僉僉僉，僉僉 (B: 13b2) 僉僉 (A: 9a8) 僉僉僉僉，僉僉僉僉，

僉僉僉僉僉僉僉，僉僉 (B: 13b3) 僉僉僉 (A: 9b1) 僉僉僉僉僉。

依他与圆成是胜义谛。依他起性落于胜义谛中，能生一切诸法之极微尘与五蕴中之识相续者是极微，故为登地圣者之境界而非俗之境界，故入于胜义中也。

The dependent and consummate natures constitute the ultimate truth. The dependent nature falls within the ultimate truth. The subatom (*paramanu, rdul phra rab*) which enables the production of all phenomena and the conscious continuum (*cittasaṃtāna, sems rgyud/sems rgyun*) which is one of the five aggregates are the finest particles. They are thus the cognitive object of the *bhumi*-treaded saints but not of ordinary beings. Therefore, the dependent nature falls within the ultimate truth.

1.1.3. Middle way free from *samāropa* and *apavāda*

散，翫循茲毳解穢穢：

三，离有无中道：

Third, as for the middle way free from reification and denigration:

1.1.3.1. Freedom from reification

羂緒羂 (B: 13b4) 羂緒羂羂，羂彼彼毳 (A: 9b2) 羂羂羂羂，羂羂羂羂羂，

羂羂羂羂羂， (B: 13b5) 羂羂羂，羂羂羂羂。

小乘行人极细微尘与相续不断之识等，圣者之境界而非俗之境故，超越有边离常见。

遍計者，唯識行人承許一切諸法依心生，而小乘行人遍計“諸法依極細微塵生”。

此明照自證識是不二法，三世不能變易，好比水中月影，水流動而不壞月相。

As for the imputed nature, the Vijñānavādin asserts that all phenomena arise in dependence on the mind, whereas the Hīnayānist asserts that all phenomena as arising in dependence on subatoms, which is of the imputed nature. Self-luminous reflexive awareness (*rang rig rang gsal*) is non-dual and unaltered by three times; this is compared to the reflection of the moon in water, whereupon the water flow does not interrupt the manifestation of the moon.

2.1.1.2. Paratantra-svabhāva

依識化境者是依他起性。

The objective transformation in dependence on consciousness is of the dependent nature.

2.1.1.3. Pariniṣpanna-svabhāva

能 (A: 11a1) 能转能转能，能转能转能，能转 (B: 16a3) 能转，能转能转能转能，
能转 (A: 11a2) 能转。

能化诸法之识者，自体明照自证，恒知明巧，为人法二无我之体，是胜义谛。

The consciousness which enables the miraculous transformation of all phenomena is in itself self-luminous, reflexive, and permanently aware of skillful means, which embodies selfless-ness in both individual and *dharmā*. This is of the ultimate truth.

2.1.3. Middle way free from *samāropa* and *apavāda*

能，能转能转能 (B: 16a4) 能转：

三，离有无中道者：

The third regards the middle way free from reification and denigration.

2.1.3.1. Freedom from reification

能转能转能转能，能转能，能转 (A: 11a3) 能；

明照自证识有者，超无离断见；

That self-luminous reflexive awareness exists transcends the extreme of non-existence and is free from nihilism.

2.1.3.2. Freedom from denigration

羶繇羶 (B: 16a5) 羶繇羶羶繇羶羶, 羶繇羶羶羶羶羶羶, 羶繇 (B: 16a6) 羶,
羶繇羶羶。

唯识行人承许“诸法非依微尘生”离小乘行人“诸法依微尘生”故，超有离常见。

Free from the Hīnayānist assertion that all phenomena arise in dependence on atoms, the
Vijñānavādin assertion that all phenomena does not arise in dependence on atoms
transcends the extreme of existence and is free from eternalism.

羶繇羶羶羶繇羶羶羶羶羶羶。

故而唯识行人离有无安立中道也。

Thus, free from both existence and non-existence, the Vijñānavādin abides in the middle
way.

羶 (B: 16b1) 羶繇羶 (A: 11a5) 羶繇羶。

至此说见地竟。

So far is the end of the view.

2.2. Conduct

翫翫，設結瓶瓶翫翫。歸翫翫，《翫翫》翫 (B: 16b2) 翫。

行者，依十地、五位修也。修行《百法》中宣明。

As for the conduct, people practice in accordance with the ten stages (*daśabhūmi, sa bcu*) and five paths (*pāñcamārga, lam lnga*). The procedure is elucidated in the *Śatadharmaprakāśamukha-śāstra*.

2.3. Concentration

愍翫，結、瓶 (A: 11a6) 茲翫翫歸翫，愍翫。

定者，随顺于地、位修是定。

As for the concentration, to practice in accordance with the stages and paths is concentration.

3. Both object and consciousness are empty

茲翫 “翫翫翫翫 (B: 16b3) 翫” 翫翫，翫翫翫翫、 (A: 11a7) 翫、愍翫翫：

文中“次说境识双空”者，中道行人见、行、定三中：

Quote “next teaches the emptiness of both the object and consciousness.”

Among the Mādhyamika view, conduct and meditation:

3.1. View

翫翫，翫翫、翫翫、翫翫翫 (B: 16b4) 翫。

见者，三性二谛中道等。

The view is explained in terms of the three natures, the two truths, and the middle way.

3.1.1. Trisvabhāva

𑖀𑖄, 𑖀𑖄𑖀, 𑖀𑖄𑖀、𑖀𑖄𑖀、𑖀𑖄𑖀 (A: 11a8) 𑖀𑖄𑖀:

一，三性者，遍计、依他与圆成等：

First, the three natures include the imputed nature, the dependent nature and the consummate nature.

3.1.1.1. Parikalpita-svabhāva

𑖀𑖄𑖀, 𑖀𑖄𑖀 (B: 16b5) 𑖀𑖄𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀, 𑖀𑖄𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀 (A: 11b1) 𑖀𑖄𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀;

𑖀𑖄 (B: 16b6) 𑖀𑖄𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀. 𑖀𑖄𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀 (A: 11b2) 𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀 (B: 17a1)

𑖀𑖄𑖀, 𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀𑖀, 𑖀𑖄𑖀𑖀𑖀.

其中遍计者，小乘行人心外依他起性与唯识行人明照自证识均许为有，中道行人以四缘审察为无，则喻小乘、唯识等有执为与白螺黄见一法，故而属遍计。

As for the imputed nature, both the Hīnayānist assertion on dependent origination external to the mind and the Vijñānavādin assertion on self-luminous reflexive awareness are substantialist views, whereas Mādhyamikas refute them as ungrounded through examining the four conditions (*catvāraḥ pratyayāḥ, rkyen bzhi*). Thus the Hīnayānist and

Vijñānavādin substantialist views are metaphorically identified with the eye which sees the white condor as yellow. This counts as the imputed nature.

3.1.1.2. Paratantra-svabhāva

隨視禰禰 (A: 11b3; B: 17a2) 繼繼禰禰，繼繼禰禰繼繼禰禰，繼繼禰禰繼繼禰禰。隨繼

(A: 11b4; B: 17a3) 繼繼禰禰■禰。

一切诸法依因缘生，若生复继灭，无缘则无生灭也。此是依他性也。

All phenomena arise out of causality (*hetupratyaya*, *rgyu rkyen*). If cessation succeeds birth, there would be no birth and cessation without the function of conditions (*pratyaya*, *rkyen*). This is of the dependent nature.

3.1.1.3. Pariniṣpanna-svabhāva

繼繼繼繼繼繼繼繼，繼繼繼繼。

离四边真空义者是圆成性。

The reality of true emptiness free from the four extremes (*catuṣkoṭi*, *mu bzhi*) is of the consummate nature.

3.1.2. Satyadvaya

(B: 17a4) 禰，繼禰禰禰：

二，世、胜二谛者：

Second, as for the two truths of the conventional and ultimate:

3.1.2.1. Samvrti-satya

(A: 11b5) 翫殊莖姪悅毳， 骸嫩牒莖猷猷 (B: 17a5) 翫猷牒猷， 網朶茲毳惜級，
纖級牒 (A: 11b6) 纖， 毳猷牒猷。

小乘行人心外依他与唯识行人明照自证识非离四边故， 属遍计， 是世俗谛。

The Hīnayānist assertion on dependent origination external to the mind and the Vijñānavādin assertion on self-luminous reflexive awareness are not free from the four extremes. Therefore, they count as the imputed nature and belong to the conventional truth.

3.1.2.2. Paramārtha-satya

網 (B: 17a6) 朶茲毳翫猷， 翫猷牒猷。

离四边真空者是胜义谛。

The reality of true emptiness free from the four extremes is the ultimate truth.

纖級牒朶猷猷毳 (B: 17b1) 報猷牒： (A: 11b7) 猷收莖猷猷牒猷， 翫殊莖悅猷猷
(B: 17b2) 翫猷牒、 姪悅猷猷， 猷猷猷猷 (A: 11b8) 猷； 猷牒猷猷猷猷 (B:
17b3) 猷猷， 翫猷猷猷猷。

此世俗分颠倒与真实：外道行人无我中执我，小乘行人诸法依微尘生、心外法等是颠倒世俗；唯识行人依他与圆成是真实世俗。

The conventional truth is classified into the perverted conventional truth and the correct conventional truth: the non-Buddhist egoistic adherence to non-self and the Hīnayānist assertion that all phenomena arise in dependence on atoms and exist external to the mind are the perverted conventional truth, whereas the Vijñānavādin dependent and consummate natures are the pure conventional truth.

3.1.3. Middle way free from *samāropa* and *apavāda*

離有無說中道者：

As for the middle way free from reification and denigration:

As for the middle way free from reification and denigration:

3.1.3.1. Freedom from reification

禪繆（A: 12a1）羴（B: 17b4）羴羴羴羴羴羴羴羴，羴羴羴，羴羴羴羴；

胜义谛真空自性不可得，超越有离常见；

The unattainability of the intrinsic nature of true emptiness on the level of ultimate truth transcends the extreme of existence and is free from eternalism.

3.1.3.2. Freedom from denigration

竟繖庸繖 (B: 17b5) 繖繖繖 (A: 12a2) 繖, 繖繖繖繖, 繖繖繖, 繖繖繖繖。

依世俗谛如幻如化稍许假分, 超越无, 离断见。

Assertions through *prajñapti* on the miraculous manifestation at the level of the conventional truth transcends the non-existence and is free from nihilism.

繖繖繖繖 (B: 17b6) 繖繖繖繖。

中道行人之见说竟。

An explanation of the Mādhyamika view ends.

3.2. Conduct

繖繖, 繖繖、 (A: 12a3) 繖繖繖繖繖繖。繖繖繖, 繖繖 (B: 18a1) 繖繖繖繖。

行者, 依五位、十地等修也。修行应从般若中说可知。

As for the conduct, people practice in accordance with the ten stages and five paths. The practice is to be known from the Prajñāpāramitā corpus.

3.3. Concentration

憊憊，底瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶。

定者，依五位修。

As for the concentration, people practice in accordance with the five paths.

瓶瓶瓶，散（A: 12a4）瓶瓶瓶瓶（B: 18a2）瓶瓶瓶瓶、瓶瓶、瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶。

至于此，依三品根性说各自三性二谛中道等差异竟。

So far is the end of an explanation of the three categories of predisposed capacities in terms of the three natures, the two truths and the middle way.

4. One returns to the source [of the mind]

瓶，瓶瓶瓶瓶（B: 18a3）瓶（A: 12a5）瓶，瓶瓶“瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶”瓶瓶瓶。瓶瓶

“瓶瓶”瓶（B: 18a4）瓶，瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶。散（A: 12a6）瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶，瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶瓶

（B: 18a5）瓶，瓶“瓶瓶”瓶。

后，传授嘱咐无念者，文中“乃至归本还源”等条文中“乃至”者，跃入最深处。说第三法后方说极深无念，则所谓“乃至”。

Later, the Buddha entrusted the teaching of non-conceptuality (*avikalpa, rnam par mi rtog pa*), which relates to the quotation “up till one returns to the the source [of the mind].”

The phrase “up till” indicates the action of jumping into the deepest. The extremely profound teaching of non-conceptuality was given right after the third one, which points to the phrase “up till.”

“講頌禪悅” 劫變， 能變往 (A: 12a7) 鋒嶽禪禪 (B: 18a6) 憚頌禪悅禪經，
 能往茲攝頌禪禪禪禪， 能禪變 (A: 12a8) 能 (B: 18b1) 能禪禪禪禪禪，
 能禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪 (B: 18b2) 隨禪， 能 (A: 12b1)
 能禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪 (B: 18b3) 能。 能禪禪禪禪禪禪 (A: 12b2)
 能禪禪禪禪禪， 能禪禪禪禪禪禪 (B: 18b4) 能禪禪禪， 能禪禪禪禪禪禪 (A: 12b3)
 能禪禪禪禪禪禪 (B: 18b5) 能禪， 能禪禪禪禪禪禪禪禪， 能禪禪禪禪禪禪 (A: 12b4)
 能 (B: 18b6) 能禪禪禪禪禪， 能禪禪禪禪禪， 能禪禪禪禪禪禪 (B: 19a1) 能禪 (A:
 12b5) 能禪。 能禪禪禪禪， 能往禪禪禪禪禪禪。

“归本还源”者，夫诸佛如来住于本源无念法界中，[释迦]与诸佛俱同受用法乐，
 以往昔愿力饶益诸有情故，权于西天金刚座之北方Phe-nār国内释种净愿王与摩耶
 皇后处化现出生以受身，内宫二十三载承受五欲娱乐，后出家于雪山六年修苦行，
 灵鹫山王舍城内等十年说般若，复三十一载纯说杂藏法，住世八十年，有情根因尽，
 则归于因位，退还于本源无念法界大寂定。此无念法界者是一切诸佛所证法。

Quote “one returns to the source [of the mind].”

The *buddhas* and *tathagatas* abide in the non-conceptual reality realm (*dharmadhātu*,
chos kyi dbyings) which is the source. They altogether take enjoyment in the Dharmic
 pleasure. Out of the power of the previously committed vow to benefit the sentient beings,
 the Buddha took birth as the son of King Pure-vow and Queen Māyā of the Phe-nār
 Kingdom to the north of Vajrāsana in the West. He took enjoyment in sensual pleasures
 in the harem for twenty-three years, renounced the household life for austere retreat in the

破彼有故次说“境识双空”。所谓“境识等空”执着于空故，后破境为假，以“识者实有”破空执。依次情状如此。西天人法藏之次第者，“境识实有”与“境假识实”等二法是权法，“境识双空”者是实，属中道，以量令其成立也。

Quote “both object and consciousness are empty.”

When the *buddhas* and *tathāgatas* first taught that both object and consciousness exist, the sentient beings adhered to the substantial existence of both object and consciousness. Thus, in order to counter that existence, they then taught that “both object and consciousness are empty.” However, for the teaching that “both object and consciousness are empty” potentially leads to an attachment to emptiness, object is refuted as illusionary and the teaching that “consciousness is real” is used to counter this attachment to the emptiness. Thus is the order in which the teachings are presented. According to the canonical hierarchy in India, that “both object and consciousness are real” and that “object is illusionary while consciousness is real” are provisional teachings, whereas that “both object and consciousness are empty” is the root, which counts as Madhyamaka (*dbu ma*) established through valid knowledge (*pramāṇa, tshad ma*).

攀駘散禪耑，解解禪 (B: 14b3) 變，禪變到徧茲變，解禪禪變變禪 (A: 10a3) 禪禪；
徧變禪禪禪 (B: 14b4) 禪變徧散。 “禪變變徧禪，禪變變徧禪” 變。 禪 “禪禪 (A:
10a4) 禪 (B: 14b5) 變” 變， 變變茲變， 解禪禪禪， 徧變禪禪禪變變變禪 “禪 (B:
14b6) 禪 (A: 10a5) 禪” 變變散。 “禪禪禪禪” 變散變禪禪變變禪禪禪 (B: 15a1)
解禪禪禪禪禪， (A: 10a6) 變禪禪禪禪， 禪 “禪禪禪禪” 變 “禪禪 (B: 15a2) 禪禪”

報熾黝黝，縱恹恹桶 (A: 10a7) 離解離，翰翰恹恹 (B: 15a3) 離 “離離離離”
離。

量说三法中，中央法者，离一异之法持，是中道法，应成之本；首尾二法是权法也。故所谓“喻同如空花，喻异如柱根”。故而“境识双空”者，离四缘，是中道法，首尾二法假言施設许为“假法”也。“境识双有”等依三性二谛中道等分别三乘别总法，依次令分明，则先说“境识双有”与“境泯识留”，然后说第二中道。则依差异次第须说“境泯识留”。

Among the three teachings established through valid knowledge, the middle one – grounded in the Dharma free from unity and multiplicity – is Madhyamaka which is the root of *prasaṅga* (*thal 'gyur*), whereas both the first and last teachings are provisional. Thus the saying goes “sameness is compared to empty flower, whereas disparity to columns.” Therefore, the teaching that “both object and consciousness are empty” is free from the four conditions and is Madhyamaka, whereas the first and last teachings are asserted as provisional through *prajñāpti* (*gdags pa/btags pa*). Teachings such as that “both object and consciousness exist” classify the particular and common teachings of the three vehicles through the three natures, the two truths and the middle way. To clarify them in order, the Buddha first taught that “both object and consciousness exist” and that “object dissolves and consciousness remains,” and then taught the second one Madhyamaka. That “object dissolves and consciousness remains” should be taught [right after the first teaching] based on the spiritual hierarchy of disciples.

頤髡： 纒 “詎牘樞纒”、 (A: 10a8) “詎牘纒纒”、 (B: 15a4)

“詎纒纒纒” 纒纒纒纒纒纒纒， 纒纒纒纒？

问曰： 先依次说“境识双有”、“境识双空”与“境泯识留”等， 非依差异次第乎？

Question: Is it not based on the spiritual hierarchy of disciples if the teachings were presented in the order of that “both object and consciousness exist,” that “both are empty,” and that “object dissolves and consciousness remains”?

髡髡： 纒 (A: 10b1) 纒 (B: 15a5) 纒纒纒纒纒纒， 纒纒纒纒纒纒纒纒。 纒 “詎牘纒纒” (B: 15a6) 纒纒， 纒 (A: 10b2) 纒纒纒纒纒。

答曰： 彼依根说三法者， 为摧毁执着心而说。 后说此“境识双空” 依差异次第也。

Reply: A presentation of the three teachings in accordance with disciples’ predispositions is for the purpose of deconstructing the grasping mind. It is in line with the spiritual hierarchy to later teach that “both object and consciousness are empty.”

Abbreviations and Bibliography

1. Sigla

- BCh *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*. Massive collection of texts from the Drikung Kagyu, as well as some texts from other Kagyu orders, edited by Agon Rinpoche (19th and 20th centuries). 151 vols. Lhasa: 2004.
- BS *Bu ston rin chen grub dang sgra tshad pa rin chen rnam rgyal gyi gsung 'bum*. 28 vols. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1965–1971.
- D sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur and bsTan-'gyur. Numbering based on: Hakuju Ui et al., ed. *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur)*. Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934.
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- DYM *Dacheng yaodao miji 大乘要道密集. The Secret Collection of Works on the Essential Path of Mahāyāna: A compilation of early Chinese translations of Tibetan tantric Buddhist texts*. 4vols. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2012.
- GS *Khams gsum chos kyi rgyal po dpal mnyam med sgam po pa 'gro mgon*

- bsod nams rin chen mchog gi gsung 'bum yid bzhin nor bu*. 4 vols. Kathmandu; Delhi: Khenpo S. Tenzin and Lama T. Namgyal, 2000.
- ITJ IOL Tib J: Reference for Tibetan-language materials from the Stein collection of Dunhuang manuscripts held by the British Library.
- JS *Jo bo rje dpal ldan a ti sha'i gsung 'bum*. 1 vol. *bKa' gdams dpe dkon gces btus*. Beijing: Krung-go'i-bod-rig-pa-dpe-skrun-khang, 2006.
- MS *dPal rgyal ba karma pa sku 'phreng brgyad pa mi bskyod rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*. 26 vols. Lhasa, 2004.
- NgS *rGyal dbang lnga pa ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho'i gsung 'bum*. 28 vols. Beijing: Krung-go'i-bod-rig-pa-dpe-skrun-khang, 2009.
- P Peking bKa'-'gyur and bsTan-'gyur. Numbering based on: Daisetz T. Suzuki, ed. *The Tibetan Tripitaka. Peking Edition: Catalogue & Index*. Reduced-size edition. Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co., 1985.
- PhG Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho, ed. *Phyag chen rgya gzhung*. In *Nges don phyag rgya chen po'i khrid mdzod*, vols. 1, 2 & 3. New Delhi: rNam-par-rgyal-ba-dpal-zhwa-dmar-ba'i-chos-sde, 1997.
- PT Pelliot tib étain: Reference for Tibetan-language materials from the Pelliot collection of Dunhuang manuscripts held by the Bibliothèque Nationale.
- S *bsTan 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)*. Sichuan: Krung-go'i-bod-kyi-shes-rig-dpe-skrun-khang, 1994–2005.
- SK *Sa skya bka' 'bum*. 15 vols. Kathmandu: Sachen International, 2006.

- T sTog bKa'-'gyur. Numbering based on: Tadeusz Skorupski, *A Catalogue of the sTog Palace Kanjur*. Bibliographia Philologica Buddhica Series Major 4. Tokyo: IIBS, 1985.
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Notes I *Notes on the Keypoints of Mahāmudrā as the Ultimate* (𐰇𐰏𐰣𐰚𐰣𐰚𐰣𐰚𐰣𐰚𐰣𐰚 *大印究竟要集记), vol. 1 (commentary on the first part of the *Keypoints* from the beginning till the end of Nāgārjuna’s biography), Tang.#inv. 345#2858 (manuscript, 22 folios), Tang.#inv. 345#7163 (manuscript, 34 folios), and Tang.#inv. 427#3817 (manuscript, the first 29 folios on verso).

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- rGyud chung* Sa-chen Kun-dga'-snying-po, *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhag [chung ngu]*. In SK: 5–28, vol.1.
- rGyud spyi* bSod-nams-rtse-mo, *rGyud sde spyi'i rnam par bzhag pa*. In SK: 1–157, vol. 3.
- Rim don* Vimalamitra, *Rim gyis 'jug pa'i sgom don*. P 5334; D 3938; S 3168, vol. 64
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- BhK III* Kamalaśīla, *Bhāvanākrama III*. In Tucci 1971 (Sanskrit text).

- CMA* *Caturmudrānvaya*. Tibetan text: *Phyag rgya bzhi rjes su bstan pa*, D 2225. In Mathes 2015: 389–402 (Sanskrit & Tibetan texts); 119–127 (English translation).
- DBh* *Daśabhūmikasūtra*. In Rahder 1926 (Sanskrit text).
- DMU* *Dohākośanāmamahāmudropadeśa*. Tibetan text: *Do ha mdzod phyag rgya chen po 'i man ngag*. In PhG: 90–93, vol. 2.
- GMT* *Vilāsavajra, Guhyagarbhamahātantrarājaṭīkā*. Tibetan text: *rGyud kyi rgyal po gsang ba 'i snying po 'i 'grel pa*, D 4718.
- GM* *Guhyasamājatantra*. In Fremantle 1971: 173–452 (Sanskrit & Tibetan texts); 27–172 (English translation).
- GMUṬ* *Guhyasamājamaṇḍalopāyikāṭīkā*. Tibetan text: *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa 'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga 'i 'grel pa*, D 1871.
- GPKU* *Vajrapāṇi, Guruparamparākramopadeśa*. Tibetan text: *Bla ma brgyud pa 'i rim pa 'i man ngag*. In PhG: 392–428, vol. 3.
- HM* *Ratnākaraśānti, Śrīhevajrapaṇjikāmuktitāvali*. Sanskrit text: In Tripathi & Negi 2001; Tibetan text: *dpal dgyes pa 'i rdo rje 'i dka' 'grel mu tig phreng ba*, D 1189.
- HV* *Śrīhevajradākinījālasaṃvaramahātantrarājā*. In Snellgrove 1959b (Sanskrit & Tibetan texts); 1959a (English translation).
- JĀA* *Jñānālokālamkāra*. Study Group on Buddhist Sanskrit Literature, ed. *Jñānālokālamkāra: Transliterated Sanskrit Text Collated with Tibetan and*

Chinese Translations. Tokyo: Taisho University Press, 2004.

KC *Kālacakratantra*. In Chandra 1971 (Sanskrit text); Newman 1987 (English translation).

KP Tilopa (?), *Karṇatantravajrapada*. Tibetan text: *sNyan brgyud rdo rje'i tshig rkang*, D 2338. In Torricelli 1998 (Synopsis, Tibetan text & English translation).

LAS *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*. In Nanjio 1923 (Sanskrit text).

MA Śāntarakṣita, *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*. In Ichigō 1989: 185–224 (Tibetan text & English translation).

MĀk Kamalaśīla, *Madhyamakāloka*. Tibetan text: *dBu ma snang ba*, D 3887.

MĀr Ratnākaraśānti, *Mutkāvalī*. In Tripathi & Negi 2001 (Sanskrit text).

MAU Ratnākaraśānti, *Madhyamakālaṃkāropadeśa*. Tibetan text: *dBu ma rgyan gyi man ngag*, P 5586; D 4085; S 3314, vol. 78.

MAV- Ratnākaraśānti, *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti-madhyamapratipadāsiddhi*. Tibetan

MPS text: *dBu ma rgyan gyi 'grel pa dbu ma'i lam grub pa*, D 4072.

MMK *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. In Wallis 2002: 171–249 (English synopsis, Sanskrit text & Tibetan text).

MSM Candragomin, *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgītimahāṭikā*. Tibetan text: *'Jam dpal gyi mtshan yang dag par brjod pa'i rgya cher 'grel pa*, P 3363. In Tam 2011: 74–153 (Chinese translation).

- MU* Tilopa, *Mahāmudropadeśa*. Tibetan text: *Phyag rgya chen po 'i man ngag*, D 2303. In Tiso & Torricelli 1991 (Tibetan text & English translation)
- MVT* *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhitāntra*. Tibetan text: *rNam par snang mdzad chen po mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa rnam par sprul pa byin gyis rlob pa shin tu rgyas pa mdo sde dbang po'i rgyal po zhes bya ba'i chos kyi rnam grangs* (D 491); Chinese text: *Da piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing* 大毗卢遮那成佛神变加持经 (*T* no. 848, vol. 18). In Hodge 2003: 41–443 (English translation based on the Tibetan text); Giebel 2005 (English translation based on the Chinese text).
- MVTBh* Buddhaguhya, *Mahāvairovanābhisaṃbodhitāntrabhāṣya*. Tibetan text: *rNam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub pa 'i rgyud chen po 'i 'grel bshad*, D 2663. In Hodge 2003: 41–443 (English translation).
- MVTP* Buddhaguhya, *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhitāntrapiṇḍārtha*. Tibetan text: *rNam par snang mdzad mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa 'i rgyud kyi bsdus pa 'i don*, D 2662. In Hodge 2003: 445–537 (English translation).
- NPDh* *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*. In Tam 2007: 114–177 (Sanskrit, Tibetan & Chinese texts and Chinese translation; Sanskrit edition based on Matsuda 1996: 89–113).
- NPDhT* *Nirvikalpapraveśadhāraṇīṭīkā*. Tibetan text: *'Phags pa rnam par mi rtog par 'jug pa 'i gzungs kyi rgya cher 'grel pa*, D 4000.
- PPU* Ratnākaraśānti, *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa*. Tibetan text: *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu*

phyin pa'i man ngag, P 5579; D 4079; S 3308, vol. 78.

PŚT Jñānamitra, *Prajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśatkāṭikā*. Tibetan text: *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa tshul brgya lnga bcu pa'i 'grel pa*, D 2647.

RGV *Ratnagoṭravibhāga-Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*. In Johnston 1950 (Sanskrit text, including the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga-vyākhyā*); Takasaki 1966 (English translation).

RGVV *Ratnagoṭravibhāga-vyākhyā*. Embedded within the *RGV*.

SN Maitrīpa, *Sekanirdeśa*. Tibetan text: *dBang bskur nges par bstan pa*, D 2252. In Mathes 2015: 385–388 (Sanskrit & Tibetan texts); 107–117 (English translation).

STTS *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*. Sanskrit text: In Yamada 1981; Tibetan text: *De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi kho na nyid bsdus pa theg pa chen po'i mdo* (D 476); Chinese text: *Jingangding yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* 金刚顶一切如来真实摄大乘现证大教王经 (*T* no. 865, vol. 18). In Giebel 2001 (English translation based on the Chinese text).

SDh Tilopa, *Śaddharmopadeśa*. Tibetan text: *Chos drug gi man ngag*, D 2330. In Torricelli 1996b (Tibetan text & English translation).

TD Maitrīpa, *Tattvadaśaka*. Tibetan text: *De kho na nyid bcu pa*, D 2236. In Mathes 2015: 485–488 (Sanskrit & Tibetan texts); 211–213 (English translation).

TDṬ Sahajavajra, *Tattvadaśakaṭikā*. Tibetan text: *De kho na nyid bcu pa zhes bya*

ba'i rgya cher bshad pa. In PhG: 1–31, vol. 2.

TRĀ Maitrīpa, *Tattvaratnāvalī*. Tibetan text: *De kho na nyid rin po che 'i phreng ba*, D 2240. In Mathes 2015: 341–369 (Sanskrit & Tibetan texts); 59–77 (English translation).

TV Maitrīpa, *Tattvaviṃśikā*. Tibetan text: *De kho na nyid theg pa chen po nyid shu pa*, D 2250. In Mathes 2015: 457–463 (Sanskrit & Tibetan texts); 187–190 (English translation).

TYV Ratnākaraśānti, *Triyānavyavasthāna*. Tibetan text: *Theg pa gsum rnam par gzhag pa*, D 3712.

VG Alampakalaśa, *Śrīvajramālāmahāyogatantraṭīkā-gaṃbhirārthadīpakā*. Tibetan text: *rNal 'byor chen po 'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba 'i rgya cher 'grel pa zab mo 'i don gyi 'grel pa*, D 1795.

YAS Śraddhākaravarma, *Yogānuttarārthāvatārasaṃgraha*. Tibetan text: *rNal 'byor bla na med pa 'i rgyud kyi don la 'jug pa bsdus pa*, D 3713.

YRM Kāṇhapāda, *Yogaratnamālā*. In Snellgrove 1959b: 103–159 (Sanskrit text).

2.4. Chinese Works:

DJY *Dashouyin jiatuozhi yaomen* 大手印伽陀支要门. In *DYM*, vol.4.

GDX *Guangming ding xuanyi* 光明定玄义. In *DYM*, vol. 1.

JYZ *Jingangding jing yuqie shibahui zhigui* 金刚顶经瑜伽十八会指归. *T* no. 869,

vol. 18. In Giebel 1995: 111–115 (English translation).

SFJ *Shicheng dengchu feng jilun yi* 师承等处奉集轮仪. In *DYM*, vol. 4.

TGXL *Tiansheng gaijiu xinding lvling* 天盛改旧新定律令. Beijing: Falv chubanshe, 2000.

XDBP *Xinyi dashouyin bugongyi peijiao yaomen* 新译大手印不共义配教要门. In *DYM*, vol. 4.

XDJ *Xinyi dashouyin jinyingluo yaomen* 新译大手印金瓔珞要门. In *DYM*, vol.4.

YJFX *Yi jixiang shanglelun fangbian zhihui shuangyundao xuanyi juan* 依吉祥上乐轮方便智慧双运道玄义卷. In *DYM*, vol. 1.

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