

Sahajavajra's *Sthitisamāsa*: Bringing Maitrīpa's System in Line with Kālacakra¹

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With his broad and at the same time profound knowledge of nearly everything Indian, the honoree of this volume has not only been superbly representing Indology, but also supporting Tibetan and Buddhist Studies throughout his tenure at Göttingen University. I thus celebrate my dear colleague Thomas Oberlies's distinguished career by offering herewith a contribution to Buddhist studies, namely some recent insights I have gained into the tantric section of Sahajavajra's *Sthitisamāsa*.

In the tantric section of his *Sthitisamāsa*, Maitrīpa's (986–1063)² heart disciple Sahajavajra interestingly departs from his teacher's Hevajra-based interpretation of the four joys by lining it up instead with the *Sekoddeśa*, which is the section from the *Paramādibuddha* (i.e., the original *Kālacakratantra*) on empowerment and *śaḍaṅgayoga*.³

The Sequence of the Four Joys

The four joys must be recognized at four particular moments during tantric empowerment and completion stage practice.⁴ Following Maitrīpa's understanding, the four moments and joys are as follows:

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- 1 Many thanks to Philip H. Pierce (Kathmandu) for his rigorous penultimate edit.
 - 2 Roerich (1949–53: 842) settled on 1007/1010–1084/1087, while Tatz (1994: 65) has suggested ca. 1007 – ca. 1085. Roberts (2014: 4 & 212 (fn. 8)) rightly points out, however, that the *Blue Annals* do not specify the year elements, and that the life stories of Maitrīpa's disciples require that their master already had to have passed away before Vajrapāṇi reached Nepal in 1066.
 - 3 See also Isaacson & Sferra (2014: 83, n. 104), who notice early Kālacakra influences in the *Sthitisamāsa*.
 - 4 This involves sexual yoga with an actual partner (see Mallinson & Szántó 2021: 17).

The moments of	The four joys
The manifold (<i>vicitra</i>)	Joy (<i>ānanda</i>)
Maturation (<i>vipāka</i>)	Supreme joy (<i>paramānanda</i>)
Freedom from defining characteristics (<i>vilakṣaṇa</i>)	Co-emergent joy (<i>sahajānanda</i>)
Relaxation (<i>vimarda</i>)	Joy of no joy (<i>viramanānda</i>)

The first joy (*ānanda*) must be recognized during the moment of the manifold activity of embracing, kissing, and so forth; supreme joy during the moment of blissful wisdom, which occurs when the drops of *bodhicitta*⁵ have reached the tip of the male organ (*vajra*); co-emergent joy at the special moment which is free from defining characteristics; and the joy of no joy during relaxation.⁶ Thus the goal of Buddhahood, which is taken to be similar to co-emergent joy, must be marked during the third moment.

A number of scholars such as Kamalanātha, Abhayākara Gupta, Raviśrījñāna, and Vibhūticandra list the third and fourth moments and joys in reverse order.⁷ Skt. *viramānanda* in the third position is then understood as “intensification of joy,” and the corresponding moment *vimarda* as “interruption.” *Vilakṣaṇa*, then, means “other,” i.e., superior to the first three moments of only worldly joys. The main difference between the two systems is that for Maitrīpa the drops of *bodhicitta* are released during the third moment, which enables a short *sahajānanda* experience free from defining characteristics (in the following referred to as system A),⁸ while for the others (system B) the drops are retained in both the third and fourth moments. In his *Sekanirdeśa*, Maitrīpa refers to this practice of retention as forceful yoga (*haṭhayoga*).⁹ System A finds support from the *Hevajratāntra* (even though not unequivocally), Maitrīpa’s preferred source, while system B is in line with the *Kālacakratāntra*, as evident

5 According to some tantric sources, sexual fluids, semen virile and sometimes also female reproductive fluids, are called *bodhicitta*. This type of *bodhicitta* is not only physiological, though, but has also a psychical aspect to it (see Wangchuk 2007: 218).

6 See Mathes 2021: 105.

7 See Kvaerne 1986: 34–35.

8 According to Maitrīpa’s *Caturmudropadeśa* (see Mathes 2021: 105).

9 Isaacson and Sferra 2014: 263. See also Mallinson & Szántó 2021: 17.

from the following two verses (81–82) in the *Sekoddeśa*, which Sahajavajra quotes in the *Sthitisamāsa*:

Joy is the descent of the semen
 [From] the lotus at the crown [to the one at the] spot between the eyebrows.
 [Between] the throat and the heart there is supreme joy.
 From there[, descending further,] the intense joy (*virama*).¹⁰

This variegated joy (i.e., intense joy) [occurs until the semen is] at the navel.
 At this point, having entered the secret lotus,
 The semen descends into the vajra jewel,
 Causing coemergent joy—so long as it is not emitted.¹¹

This co-emergent joy continues as the ascending drops of *bodhicitta* turn into Vajrasattva at the secret place, Mahāsattva at the navel, Bodhisattva at the heart, Samayasattva at the throat, Vajrayoga¹² at the forehead and Kālacakra upon finally reaching the crown of the head.¹³

10 It should be noted, however, that the Tibetan translation of *virama* is not the expected *khyad dga'* (“intense joy”), but *dga' ba dang bral ba* (“joy of no joy”).

11 SS (B 185b–186a, D 97a, P 104b): | *de gsungs pa* | *dga' ba khu ba* ^(a) *'bab pa* ^(a) *ste* | | *gtsug tor* ^(b) *smin phrag* ^(b) *padma'i tshad* ^(c) | | *mgrin pa snying gar mchog dga' ste* | | *de^d nas dga' ba dang bral bar 'gyur* | SS 6.21 (=SU 80) | *sna tshogs rol mos lte ba gnas* | | *ji srid gsang ba'i padmar son* | | *de srid gsang ba'i nor bur gnas* ^(c) | | *ma 'phos bar du lhan cig skyes* | SS 6.22 (=SU 81)
^a B *'babs* ^b B *smig phrag* P *smin phyag* ^c BD *tshal* ^d D *da* ^e DP *nas*
 The Sanskrit of these two verses is missing in the Nepalese manuscript, and supplied from Gnoli's appendix (p. 139) to Orofino 1994: *śukrasyāgatir ānandam uṣṇīṣād ūrṇṇāpaṅkaje | kaṅṭhe hr̥di paramānandaṃ viramānandaṃ tato bhavet* || (SU 80) *vividharamaṇaṃ nābhau guhyapadme yato gatam | vajramaṇau ca guhyasthe sahajānandam acyutam* || (SU 81).

12 Taken here as the name of one of the six self-arisen supramundane beings. See Vienna Buddhist Translation Studies Group, Summary of Empowerment (*Sekoddeśa*, Toh 361). 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. (<<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh361.html>>), i.41.

13 This is clear from *Sekoddeśa*, verses 21c–23d and Nāropa's commentary SUT_S (107₁₃₋₁₅) on them: “Being in a [state] without duality or movement, and the semen turned upwards, this very [yogin] attains the four [beings] starting with Vajasattva. [This is as the semen] reaches in successive order the secret place, the navel, the heart, and the throat. Reaching the forehead it is the one previously called the fourfold yoga of purity and so forth (i.e., Vajrayoga); and reaching the crown of the head Kālacakra. The beings are therefore six.” (*asāv evādvayo 'kṣara ūrdhvaretā guhyānābhiḥṭkaṅṭhagamena yathākramaṃ vajrasattvādinām catuṣṭayaṃ labhate | laṭāgaḥ pūrvoktaviśuddhādicaturvidhayogākhyah | uṣṇīṣagaḥ kālacakra iti nāmeti ṣaḍ sattvāḥ*).

The *Hevajatantra*

Some passages of the *Hevajatantra* support B, most of all the *locus classicus* for the sequence of the four moments, during which the four joys must be recognized:

[The moment of the] manifold is called variety,
Since it involves embracing, kissing, and so forth.
[The moment of] maturation is the reverse of the [first moment]
In that it is the enjoyment of blissful wisdom.

[The moment of] *vimarda* is said to be the reflecting upon [the fact]
That one has experienced bliss.
[The moment of] *vilakṣaṇa* is something other than these three,
Being free from both passion and absence of passion.”¹⁴ HT 2.3.7–8

In his *Caturmudropadeśa*, Maitrīpa explains the deviation from A as resulting from the fact that in treatises such as the *Hevajatantra* the correct sequence has not always been made explicit in order to confuse outsiders who do not rely on a guru.¹⁵ Interesting is also a discussion in the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*, where Rāmapāla quotes HT 2.5.70cd with the reading *viramādiḥ paramāt paraḥ śūnyāc śūnyam tu herukam* (“The beginning of [the joy of] no joy (*virama*) is beyond supreme [joy]. Emptier than empty is Heruka”). Rāmapāla, a follower of A, explains that *viramādiḥ* is a *karmadhāraya* compound (*viramādi* understood as that which is both *virama* and *ādi*), *ādi* being the co-emergent joy here.¹⁶ In other words, the correct reading for Rāmapāla it is not “at the end of supreme joy,” but “the co-emergent joy, which is the joy of no joy.”

The best support of A are the *Hevajra* verses 2.5.66–68:

14 HT 2.3.7–8 (HT 156_{1,4}): *vicitram vividham khyātam āliṅgacumbanādikam | vipākam tad-viparyāsam sukhajñānasya bhūñjanam || vimardam ālocanam proktaṃ sukham bhuktaṃ mayeti ca | vilakṣaṇam tribhyo 'nyatra rāgārāgavivarjitam ||*

15 CMU (B 11b_{1,2}, D 213a_{6,7}, P 232b_{6,7}): *de ni bla ma la ltos^a pa dang bral ba^b glegs bam gyis mkhas par^c byed pa 'i^c gang zag gi^d ched^e du dkrugs nas bshad de | ^a P bltos ^b P om. ^c D om. ^d D gis ^e DP phyed*

16 Sferra and Isaacson 2014: 174 & 275–276.

[The master] should point out to them the true reality
 [Encountered] at the beginning of the [joy of] no joy at the end of supreme
 [joy],
 The ultimate (*anta*), which is hidden in all tantras,
 In the end (*anta*) it has been revealed.¹⁷

The goddess asks on that occasion
 In connection with vajra worship:
 “What is that moment like, O god?
 Describe it, great lord!”¹⁸

There is no beginning, no end, and no in between in it.
 [There is] no cyclic existence and no nirvāṇa.
 This is the ultimate great bliss,
 Where there is neither other nor self.¹⁹

In his *Muktāvalī*, Ratnākaraśānti (an exponent of A) comments:

“The beginning of [the joy of] no joy” refers to what precedes [the joy of] no joy. “The end of supreme [joy]” refers to what is subsequent to supreme joy. To those who wonder what it is, he said “the ultimate,” namely, the wisdom from a *prajñā* (i.e., a consort). This is hidden, i.e., not stated openly, in any tantras. “In the end it has been revealed” means that after all it has been revealed in this tantra. With this he indicates that it is the supreme tantra of all tantras. “What is that moment like?” is asked in order that the great revelation be enunciated.²⁰

The Illustrious One said, “[In it, there is] no beginning,” and so forth. Five of the negative words have the meaning of “nor.” The beginning and end are, in sequential order, the supreme [joy] and the [joy] of no joy. Cyclic existence and

17 HT 212_{5,6}: *tattvaṃ ca deśayet tatra viramādīparamāntakam | gopitaṃ sarvatantreṣv antam antam prakāśitam ||*

18 HT 212_{7,8}: *prcchate tatra sā devī vajrapūjāprayogataḥ | tat kṣaṇam kīdrśam deva kathayasva mahāprabho ||*

19 HT 212_{9,10}: *āi na anta na majjha tahiṃ naū bhava naūa nibbāṇa | ehu so paramamahāsuhai naū para naū appāṇa ||*

20 HT 212₁₃₋₁₆: *viramādīti viramāndāt pūrvam | paramāntakam iti paramānandāt param | kiṃ punas tad ity āha – antam iti prajñājñānam ity arthaḥ | etac ca sarvatantreṣu gopitaṃ na vyaktīkṛtam | antam prakāśitam iti sarvānte 'smiṃs tantrē prakāśitam | anena sarva-tantrāṇāṃ uttaratantram etad iti sūcayati || tat kṣaṇam kīdrśam ity atyantavyaktīkaraṇār-thaḥ praśnaḥ |*

nirvāṇa are also these two [joys], and so are passion and its absence. On the other hand, here, being anterior in relation to the co-emergent, [supreme joy] is the beginning, and being posterior [to it, the joy of no joy] is the end. “Cyclic existence” means: This arises from that. *Nirvāṇa* is the result of its termination. Because of one’s focus on the wished-for co-emergent, there is passion; and because one’s focus on the co-emergent ceases immediately after [it has been experienced], there is dispassion. Being inferior to these two, the first joy is called average in terms of intensity (*kākvā*), as in an average body or an average message. [The coemergent joy] is one that does not occur [like] these [other] three. “At the beginning of the [joy of] no joy at the end of supreme [joy]” (2.5.66b) means that it manifests right [between these two]. “This is the ultimate great bliss”, i.e.,²¹ the co-emergent joy. This is how the ascertainment of its moment has been taught.²²

The Tantric Section of the *Sthitisamāsa*

The first twenty verses present tantra in line with Maitrīpa. This is most clearly seen in the three introductory verses, which lead over from a Madhyamaka analysis of true reality beyond the four extremes to the announcement of teaching the mantra system in terms of the succession of four seals, which are, as spelled out in verses 9–10, *karmamudrā*, *dharmamudrā*, *mahāmudrā*, and *samayamudrā*.²³ Similar to Maitrīpa is also the notion in v. 3 that true reality can be correctly realized through a special experience conferred by the guru,

21 In order to avoid repetition, the Sanskrit translation of the Apabhraṃsa *ehu so paramamahāsuhaū* is not rendered here.

22 HT 212₁₈–213₆ *bhagavān āha – āi netyādi | pañcānām nauśabdānāṃ na cety arthaḥ | ādyan-tau yathākramam paramaviramaū | bhavanirvāṇe api tāv eva | rāgavirāgāv api tāv eva | anyatra tatra sahaḥjāpekṣayā pūrvatvād ādiḥ, paratvād (em.; edition: paramatvād) antaḥ | sa bhavaty asmād iti bhavaḥ, tannirodhatvān nirvāṇam | utpitsusahajāmbanantvād rāgaḥ, anantaraniruddhasahajāmbanantvād virāgaḥ | tābhyām api hīnavāt prathamānanda eva kākvā (em.; edition: kāmṣā) madhyama ity ucyate | tadyathā madhyamam śarīram madhyamā vārteti | ete trayo 'pi yo na bhavati vīramādīparamāntakam iti cānantaram eva prakāśitaḥ | ehu so paramamahāsuhaū eṣo 'sau paramamahāasukhaḥ sahaḥjānanda ity arthaḥ | evam asya kṣaṇānyama uktaḥ |*

23 “Action seal” (*karmamudrā*) stands for an actual consort, with whom one first experiences the four joys on the physical level. The “reality seal” (*dharmamudrā*) involves not abiding or reifying through analysis. The four joys are experienced again through oral teachings leading to the insight that the manifold world is only appearances in the mind. *Mahāmudrā* embodies the goal of buddhahood. On this level, there is co-emergent joy only. The “convention seal” (*samayamudrā*) stands for the manifestation of tantric form *kāyas* for the sake of sentient beings. The four joys are experienced again in this context. See Mathes 2021: 5–6 & 99–102.

even without analysis.²⁴ Emptiness possesses, then, the great bliss of *prajñā* and *upāya* (v. 3cd), which recalls Maitrīpa's explanation in the *Tattvadaśaka* that phenomena are not only analyzed as unobstructed and without an abode, but also luminous as directly experienced in meditation (*yathābhūtasamā-dhi*).²⁵ In v. 4, Sahajavajra explains that *bodhicitta* must be practised as if on the level of the fruit. This reflects Maitrīpa's *Kudṛṣṭinirghātana*, whose quintessence is that the first five perfections of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, and meditation (i.e., "initial activity") are performed automatically by those who are realized, whereas they need to be intentionally performed by those who are still learning.²⁶

Next (v. 5) comes Tripiṭakamāla's verse from the *Nayatrayapradīpa*. Its famous definition of tantra is also quoted in Maitrīpa's *Tattvaratnāvalī*.²⁷ To ascertain that conditioned phenomena have the nature of wisdom (Yogācāra) or are empty (Madhyamaka) and that the *skandhas* are Tathāgatas or Vajrasattvas, as asserted in v. 6, reflects Maitrīpa's concept of the Tathāgata (or Akṣobhya) and Vajrasattva seals.²⁸ In v. 7, Sahajavajra takes up again v. 3, repeating that one terminates reification either through analysis or the mantra system.

Sahajavajra continues (v. 8) by letting a fictive opponent ask how tantric bliss can be the experience of emptiness, the answer being the above-mentioned vv. 9–10 on the succession of the four seals. The latter include *mahāmudrā* and thus the realization of emptiness or suchness. In v. 11 Sahajavajra says that the latter is possible for those of sharp faculties, which comports with Maitrīpa's *Tattvaviṃśikā*, v. 11, stating that somebody with sharp faculties sees true reality and is wholly devoted to *mahāmudrā*.²⁹ Verses 12–16 elaborate on applying the means provided by excessive joy for easy success, and on the perfection of

24 See, for example, Maitrīpa's *Mahāyānaviṃśikā*, verse 12, where the meaning of emptiness is said to be learned from the guru, and not through analysis. See Mathes 2021: 285.

25 Mathes 2021: 293–294.

26 Mathes 2021: 152.

27 Mathes 2021: 207.

28 In the *Pañcatathāgatamudrāvivarāṇa* we thus find the explanation that the five *skandhas* are in reality the five Tathāgatas. The first four (Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi) are sealed with Akṣobhya (the fifth Tathāgata), to show that they are mind only. The Akṣobhya seal thus stands for the realization of Yogācāra emptiness, namely the absence of subject-object duality from the dependently arising mind. To further refine one's realization in Maitrīpa's system, it is necessary to move beyond Yogācāra and embrace Madhyamaka emptiness, which means to further seal the Akṣobhya seal with the seal of Vajrasattva. See Mathes 2021: 95–96.

29 Mathes 2021: 281.

all *pāramitās*. The seals are then explained in line with Maitrīpa, namely, that *prajñā* wisdom, or co-emergent joy, is recognized between supreme joy and the joy of no joy (system A), i.e., in the third position, as also confirmed by v. 18. Sandwiched in between is v. 17, which states, also in line with Maitrīpa, that tantric practice (“wisdom attained through pith-instructions”) is possible on the basis of either Yogācāra tenets or the right middle path (Madhyamaka). In verses 18-20, Sahajavajra continues to endorse Maitrīpa’s position that the recognition of co-emergent joy in the fourth position amounts to forceful yoga (*haṭhayoga*).

From here on, Sahajavajra surprisingly switches from system A to B. What was up to verse 20 somehow negatively labelled *haṭhayoga*, still fully in line with Maitrīpa, is now presented in detail according to the Kālacakra system. Within the range of vv. 21–45, twenty and a half verses are identical with verses from the *Sekoddeśa*.³⁰ It should be noted that the few unidentified verses within this range fully accord in content with the *Sekoddeśa*. To be sure, the change from Maitrīpa’s take on the four joys to the diametrically opposed Kālacakra system comes without warning and explanation. The verses 46–51 continue with the same topic, warning again the practitioner not to lose the drops of *bodhicitta*. What follows, v. 52, could offer a way to build a bridge between the systems A and B. The translation of the Sanskrit is as follows:

On the levels of the *samaya*[*mudrā* and] *dharmamudrā*
 The wise take the co-emergent to be in the fourth position.
 [Whether] *dharmamudrā* or *mahāmudrā*—
 Both of them possess the supreme co-emergent.³¹ SS 6.52

30 SS 6.21 = SU 80; 22 = SU 81; 23 = SU 82; 24 = SU 135; 25 = SU 139; 26 = SU 140ab + 141ab; 27 = SU 142; 28 = SU 143; 29-32 not identified; 33 = SU 117; 34 = SU 118ab + 119ab; 35 = SU 119cd + 146ab; 36 = SU 146c–147b; 37ab = SU 147cd; 37c-38b not identified; 38c-f = SU 120ab + 121cd; 39 = SU 122; 40 = SU 123; 41 = SU 124; 42 = SU 125; 43 = SU 127; 44 = SU 128; 45 = SU 134.

31 SS 6.52 (16a_{3,4}): *samaye dharmamudrāyāṃ turīyaṃ sahaṃ viduḥ | dharmamudrā mahāmudrā dvayānāṃ sahaṃ param ||*. This interesting reading is not supported by the Tibetan, which reads: “On the level of *karma*- and *samayamudrā* the co-emergent is realized. *Dharmamudrā* and *mahāmudrā*, both of them are the supreme co-emergent.” (B 107b; D 98b; P106a: | *las dang dam tshig phyag rgya yi || dus su lhan cig skyes pa rtogs || chos kyi phyag rgya phyag rgya che || gnyis ni lhan cig skyes pa mchog* |). While *karmamudrā* in the Tibetan instead of *dharmamudrā* fits better with the previous verses, the statement that the co-emergent is realized on the level of *karma*- and *samaya-mudrā*, whereas *dharmamudrā*

Taking the co-emergent to be in the fourth position on the level of the *samaya-mudrā* and *dharmamudrā* leaves the possibility of still accepting its recognition in the third position on the level of *karmamudrā* (just as the context of verse 18 supplies). It could be further argued that during physical *karmamudrā* practice one experiences only an imitation of the real or supreme co-emergent during the third moment,³² something that would have to be related to the intensification of joy, which is the third joy in system B. However, this does not explain the remaining difference of releasing *bodhicitta* in system A and retaining it in system B. Khenpo Phuntsok (Lekshay Ling Inst., Kathmandu) offers the solution that in system A the physical *bodhicitta* is retained, while the real one is released. This must be seen against the Madhyamaka background that reality is taken in terms of emptiness instead of the physical or material.

The remaining 30 verses of the tantric section (SS 6.53–82) show further influences from Maitrīpa, but do not contribute to our discussion here.

Conclusion

Sahajavajra's combination of Maitrīpa's presentation of the four moments and four joys with the one in the Kālacakra system represents a remarkable early attempt at a time when Kālacakra was becoming too strong to be ignored. It marks the still immature beginning of what the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa Chos grags ye shes (1453–1526) achieved masterfully in a long comparative study detailing how Maitrīpa's and Nāropa's empowerments can be brought in line with one another.³³

is the supreme co-emergent, does not make sense, as there is also a sequence of four joys on the level of *dharmamudrā*, so that the co-emergent is realized at a particular moment on this level, too.

32 As also explained in the *Caturmudrānvaya*, a text strictly followed or even authored by Maitrīpa (see Mathes 2021: 232).

33 I.e., Zhwa dmar Chos kyi grags pa's *Mkhas grub nā ro mai tri dbang gi bzhed pa mthun par grub pa* (see Mathes 2021: 146).

Appendix: Critical Edition and Translation of *Sthitisamāsa*, verses 6.1–20

Sigla

- B Dpal spungs block print of the *Phyag chen rgya gzhung*, vol. *om*, fols. 184b5–185b6
D Derge Bstan 'gyur (Tōh. 2227), *rgyud 'grel*, vol. *wi*, fols. 96a6–97a3
M Sanskrit manuscript, NGMPP reel no. B 24/4, fols. 11a3–12a5
P Peking Bstan 'gyur (3071), *rgyud 'grel*, vol. *mi*, fols. 103b3–104b1
SU *Sekoddeśa*, edited by Raniero Gnoli in Orofino 1994:131–151.

Description of the texts

There are two microfilms containing the same Sanskrit manuscript of the *Sthitisamāsa*. In one (NGMPP reel no. B 25/15) old photos of the other (NGMPP reel no. B 24/4) were microfilmed. On the title page (fol. 1a) we find *Kośakārikā*, probably written by a second hand. As the colophon is missing, the text was provisionally cataloged in both cases under this title by the National Archives in Kathmandu and consequently by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project. The text was identified by Kazunobu Matsuda as Sahajavajra's *Sthitisamuccaya* (i.e., *Sthitisamāsa*).³⁴ The edited part from the Tantra section runs from folio 11a3 to folio 12a5 (a few *akṣaras* at the end of verse 19 are at the beginning of fol. 13, which is missing).

Instead of collating the other Tibetan canonical recensions, which do not differ much from the two main branches of the transmission stemma (Derge and Peking), I decided to compare the two chosen canonical representatives with the Dpal spungs edition of the Seventh Karmapa's (1454–1506) "Collection of Indian Mahāmudrā Works" (*Phyag chen rgya gzhung*). In some cases, this Dpal spungs edition, which was prepared under Karma Bkra shis chos 'phel (19th cent. CE),³⁵ is closer to the Sanskrit, and there is a good chance of still finding Sanskrit manuscripts at this seat of the Situ Rinpoches, whose eighth incarnation Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1700–1774) was an expert in Sanskrit grammar and editor of canonical texts.³⁶

34 Matsuda 1995: 848–843 [=205–210].

35 For a description of this edition, see Mathes 2011: 90–93.

36 Schaeffer 2009: 90–119.

The Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts together with an English Translation

vicāryaivaṃ sthīrīkṛtya catuṣkoṭivivarjitaṃ |
apratīṣṭhaṃ anutpādaṃ anirodha[11a4]m alakṣaṇaṃ || 6.1

| de ltar mtha' bzhi rnam spangs pa |
| brtags te brtan¹ par byas nas² su |
| skye ba med cing gnas pa med |
| 'gag pa med cing mtshan nyid med |

¹ B *bstan* ² B *dus*

Having thus (i.e., in accordance with Madhyamaka) been analyzed and determined

[As being] free from the four extremes,
[This very] reality, which neither abides, arises,
Nor ceases, nor has any defining characteristic,

pratītyayaṃ svasaṃvedyaṃ tattvaṃ pāramitānaye |
mantranītiṃ¹ samāśrītya caturmudrānvayāga[11a5]māt || 6.2

¹ M *-ti*

| rang rig rkyen las skyes pa ste |
| de nyid pha rol phyin pa'i tshul |
| phyag rgya (¹bzhi yi¹) rang bzhin las² |
| [B 185a] | sngags kyi tshul la brten nas su |

¹ B *bzhi'i* ² B *lus DP lung*

Must be experienced through self-awareness³⁷

As dependent arising in the Tradition of the Pāramitās.

If one follows the Tradition of the Mantras,

By virtue of the teaching on the sequence³⁸ of the four *mudrās*,

avicāraṃ asaṃdigdhaṃ viśiṣṭānubhavād guroḥ |
śūnyatāyāḥ svasaṃvedyaṃ prajñopāyamahā[11b1]sukhaṃ || 6.3

37 In the light of Skt. *svasaṃvedyaṃ*, Tib. *rang rig* must be taken in the sense of *rang gis rig par bya*, but it should then be after *rkyen las skyes pa*.

38 The Tibetan translation *rang bzhin* for Skt. *anvaya* is unusual. In Sahajavajra's commentary on the *Tattvadaśaka*, we find *phyag rgya bzhi'i rjes su 'gro ba* for *caturmudrānvaya*. See Mathes 2015: 238.

| bla ma 'i khyad par ⁽¹⁾nyams myong bas⁽¹⁾ |
| ma brtags par yang som nyi med |
| stong pa nyid kyi² rang rig ste |
| thabs dang shes rab bde chen po |
¹ P *myong ba yis* D *myong ba yin* ² D *ni*

[Reality is realized] without confusion, [even] when not analyzed,
Through the special experience [obtained] from the guru.
Emptiness [then] has³⁹ the great bliss of *prajñā* and *upāya*,
Which must be experienced by oneself.

phalastha iva nirdvaṃdvo bodhicittaṃ¹ vibhāvayet |
tad uktaṃ mantranītijñair mantranīti²viśeṣaṇaṃ [11b2] || 6.4
¹ M *–sattvaṃ* ² M *nītetī*

| 'bras gnas bzhin¹ du rtsod pa med |
| byang chub sems [D96b] ni rnam par bsgom |
| de skad du'ang | gsang sngags tshul de shes pa yis |
| sngags kyi lugs kyi khyad par gsungs |
¹ B *gzhan*

One should cultivate *bodhicitta* without disputation,
As if abiding on the level of fruition. It has been said:
“It is through those knowing the Tradition of Mantras
That there is the special feature of the Tradition of Mantras.”

ekārthe tv apy asaṃmohād bahūpāyād¹ aduṣkarāt |
tīkṣṇendriyādhikārāc ca mantrasāstraṃ viśiṣyate || 6.5
¹ M *bahūyād*

| don gcig na yang ma rmongs dang |
| thabs mang dka' ba med pa dang |
| dbang po rnon po'i dbang byas nas |
| sngags kyi ⁽¹⁾bstan bcos⁽¹⁾ khyad par 'phags |
¹ B *theg pa*

39 Due to a too literal translation of the genitive *sūnyatāyāḥ* the possessive construction gets lost in the Tibetan.

It has the same goal [as Pāramitānaya], but is free from confusion,
 Rich in [skilful] means and without difficulties.
 But it is [only] fit for those with sharp faculties.
 The treatises of Mantra[naya] are thus superior.

kṣaṇi[11b3]kā jñānarūpā vā śūnyā veti hi niścayāt |
 skandhās¹ tathāgatā vajrasattvā veti svaniścayaḥ || [11b4] 6.6

¹ M *khandās*

| gang phyir stong par rig¹ pa nyid |
 | ye shes rang bzhin skad cig ma |
 | gang phyir rdo rje sems dpar² nges |
 | phung po de bzhin gshegs par rtogs |

¹ P *rigs* ² B *par*

Since momentary [phenomena] are ascertained as either
 Having the nature of wisdom or being empty,
 The *skandhas* are ascertained⁴⁰
 Either as Tathāgatas or Vajrasattvas.⁴¹

vicārabalanirṇītaṃ nirāro¹pārthasaṃgatīḥ |
 parāmarśaṃ vinaiva syāt kathaṃ mantranayaṃ vinā || 6.7

¹ M *-co-*

| rig pa'i stobs kyis bzhag¹ pa gang |
 | ma brtags² pa ru sbyar³ ba'i⁴ don |
 | ci ste yongs su brtag bral ba |
 | sngags kyi tshul dang bral na ni |

¹ DP *gzhag* ² DP *rtags* ³ D *sbyor* ⁴ DP *ba*

Whatever has been decided on the strength of analysis,
 Is related to the meaning of not engaging in reification.
 When [one's practice] is free from investigation,
 How can it be free from the Tradition of Mantras?

40 I.e., reading *niścayaḥ* instead of *svaniścayaḥ*, the *sva-* being needed to make a *pada*.

41 Recognizing the *skandhas* as Tathāgatas amounts to their realization of being mind only, while their recognition as Vajrasattva establishes them as being empty of an own nature. This recalls Maitrīpa's Akṣobhya seal of Yogācāra emptiness and his Vajrasattva seal of Madhyamaka emptiness. See Mathes 2021: 40.

sa[11b5]rvākāraniraupamyam¹ nirāśravamahāsukham² |
devatā³haṃkārapraudham sūnyatānubhavaḥ katham || 6.8

¹ M –mya ² M –kha ³ M –tām

| nnam pa kun tu dpe med kyi¹ |

| zag pa med pa'i bde ba che |

| ^{(2)lha yi²} nga rgyal brtan³ byas pa⁴ |

| ji ltar⁵ stong nyid nyams su myong |

¹ BD na P ni ² BD lha'i ³ D blta P lta ⁴ BP pas ⁵ P lta

How can unpolluted great bliss,
Which is without example in the world of forms,
And strong⁴² through the pride of being the deity,
Be the experience of emptiness?

karmamudrām [12a1] samāsādyā dharmamudrā¹prabhedataḥ |
parasparanirākāṅkṣyaṃ samayāc ca phalaṃ katham || 6.9

¹ M -drām

| las kyi phyag rgya legs thob¹ nas |

| chos kyi phyag rgya rab phye bas |

| phan tshun ^{(2)re ba²} med na ni |

| dam tshig 'bras bu ji ltar yin |

¹ DP grub ² B ltos pa

Since the *dharmamudrā* is distinguished
After a *karmamudrā* has been obtained,
If [the two *mudrās*] are not mutually linked to each other,⁴³
How [can] there be any fruit from the *samaya[mudrā]*?

upāyasyātibāhulaṃ [12a2] viśiṣṭānubhavasya vā |
karmadharmamahāmudrābhedena katham anyathā || 6.10

| thabs ni mang po rnam kyis ni¹ |

| nyams su myong ba'i khyad par dang |

| las dang chos dang phyag rgya che |

42 Tib. “stabilized.”

43 I.e., if the four joys recognized on a physical level are not related to the four joys on the level of *dharmamudrā* (i.e., verbally teaching true reality).

| dbye ba gzhan du² ji ltar yin |

¹ P *su* ² B *gyis*

With the distinction being among *karma-*, *dharm-*, and *mahāmudrā*,
There is a multitude
Of means or special experience.⁴⁴
How could it be otherwise?

atitīkṣṇendriyatvena tathātānubhavā[12a3]d api |
mahāsukhābhisambodhiḥ sarvakāmopabhogataḥ || 6.11

| shin tu dbang po rnon po yis |
| stong¹ nyid nyams su myong ba'am |
| bde chen mngon par byang chub kyang² |
| 'dod pa kun la longs spyod pas |

¹ B *stong pa* ² DP *la*

Also, [there arises] from the experience of suchness
Through extremely sharp faculties
The perfect enlightenment of great bliss,
[Great] because all objects of desire are being enjoyed.⁴⁵

tatraiva nirbharaprītyā tasyaivopāyabhāvataḥ | [12a4]
prathamābhyāsakāle syād anyathā aduṣkaram¹ katham || 6.12

¹ M *-ra*

| der ni [B 185b] shin tu bde ba nyid |
| de ltar thabs kyi dngos po yis |
| dang¹ po'i dus su goms pa las |
| gzhan du ji ltar dka' ba min |

¹ P *dbang*

In this respect one should be [filled] with exceeding bliss
By applying the means leading to precisely that [experience]⁴⁶
[Already] at the time of one's first exercise.
Otherwise how can it be easy?

44 Tib.: "special experience through the multitude of means."

45 With the realization of their emptiness.

46 Tib.: "This exceeding bliss here [comes] through the application of such means...."

bhāvanābalataḥ pūryāḥ¹ sarvāḥ¹ pāramitā mayā |
sādhyā [12a5] sukhābhisamḃodhir iti tīkṣṇendriyaṃ katham || 6.13

¹ M -ā

| pha rol phyin pa kun bdag nyid |
| bsgoms pa'i stobs ni rdzogs pa ni¹ |
| rdzogs pa'i byang chub bsgrub² pa la |
| dbang po rnon pos cis mi 'grub |

¹ BD *na* ² D *grub*

I must perfect all *pāramitās*

On the strength of [my] meditation.⁴⁷

The perfect enlightenment of bliss to be attained –

How [can I acquire] the sharp power [necessary]?

evaṃkāraṃ namaskṛtya sahajānandabodhakam |
mudrānvayaḥ sa[12b1]māsenā mantrayānaṃ nigadyate || 6.14

| lhan cig skyes dga' rtogs pa'o¹ |
| e vaṃ la² ni phyag byas nas |
| phyag rgya'i rang bzhin mdor bsdus pa³ |
| sngags kyi theg pa bshad par bya |

¹ B *pa po* ² D *las* ³ B *pa 'o*

Respect having been paid to the syllables *e-vaṃ*,

Which allow one to realize co-emergent bliss,

The sequence of *mudrās*⁴⁸

will be explained in brief as the Mantrayāna.

nirmāṇa¹rūpiṇī prajñā karmamudrā nirātmikā |
kāyavākceśasāṃ [12b2] karmaḥpradhānājñānasādhanāi || 6.15

¹ M -ṇaṃ

47 The Tibetan did not render the gerundive *pūryāḥ* and the corresponding subject *mayā* in the instrumental, thus giving the verse a different sense: “If the strength of meditation, whose nature (*bdag nyid* for *mayā*) is all the *pāramitās*, is complete, how should one with sharp faculties not achieve the accomplishment of perfect enlightenment?”

48 The Tibetan has here again *rang bzhin* for Skt. *anvaya*: “nature of *mudrās*.”

| shes rab sprul pa'i gzugs can ma |
 | las kyi phyag rgya bdag med nyid |
 | lus dang ngag dang sems kyi las |
 | ye shes gtso bo'i rang bzhin no |

In its emanated form, the *prajñā*
 Is the *karmamudrā*, i.e., Nairātmyā.⁴⁹
 Her main deed on the level of body, speech and mind
 Is to make one attain wisdom.⁵⁰

tasmāt tayā hi yaj jñānam ānandādikramotitaṃ |
 madhye 'ntargatavijñānaṃ pra[12b3]jñājñānaṃ tat ucyate || 6.16

| gang phyir de las shes pa gang |
 | dga' ba la sogs rim skyes pa |
 | dbus su rnam par shes pa ste |
 | de ni shes rab ye shes brjod |

Therefore, what is known through her,
 Arisen according to the succession of joy and the rest—
 That recognition in the middle [between supreme joy and the joy of no joy]—
 Is called *prajñā*-wisdom.

sā¹kāraṃ ca² nirākāraṃ madhyamā pratipat tathā |
 yathādhi³mokṣato jñānam upa[12b4]deśena labhyate 6.17

¹ M *nā*- ² M *cā* ³ M *yathādhiga*-

| rnam bcas [D97a] dang ni rnam pa med |
 | de bzhin dbu ma'i rtogs¹ pa'o |
 | ji ltar mos pa'i ye shes ni |
 | man ngag gis ni 'thob par 'gyur |

¹ D *rtog*

49 I.e., taking *nirātmikā* as referring to the female consort of Hevajra, Maitrīpa's preferred deity. However, the Tibetan should then read *bdag med ma* instead of *bdag med nyid*. The literal meaning is "essenceless," but this is not the main thing an adept has in mind when approaching a *karmamudrā*.

50 Tib.: "[Her] deed ... mainly has the nature of wisdom."

Wisdom is attained through pith-instructions–
According to one’s preference for
Sākāra, Nirākāra,
Or the right middle path.⁵¹

ṛṭīyaṃ sahaṃ vidyāt seke tu¹ turī²yaṃ haṭṭhe |
samīrakaraṇaṃ nyāsānyāsato ’kṣara[12b5]yogataḥ || 6.18

¹ M om. ² M *turi-*

| gsum pa¹ lhan cig skyes par rtogs |
| btsan thabs dbang gis bzhi pa ste |
| rlung gi bkod pa² sna rtse las³ |
| mi ’gyur ba yi sbyor ba yis⁴ |
¹ DP *pa’i* ² DP *pas* ³ DP *la* ⁴ DP *yin*

Co-emergent [joy] should be known to be the third.
But in forceful empowerment it is the fourth,
The work with winds being by fixing and not fixing,⁵²
[Which is] the yoga of the indestructible [moments].

yathā yathā sukhajñānam¹ upāyena pravarttate |
tathā tathā vikalpānāṃ nivṛtyā sahaṃ[13a]² ... 6.19

¹ M *-na* ² Fol. no. 13 is missing

| ji lta ji lta bde ye shes |
| thabs kyis rab tu (¹bsgrub pa¹) yin |
| de lta de lta rtog² pa de |
| (³log par³) lhan cig skyes pa⁴ mchog |
¹ DP *bsgyur ba* ² BDP *rtogs* ³ DP *rtog par* ⁴ B *pa’i*

Just as the wisdom of bliss
[Then] occurs⁵³ through the means (*upāya*),
So too, with the cessation of thoughts,
Does the supreme co-emergent.

51 Tib.: “Madhyamaka realization.”

52 The Tibetan has “tip of the nose” instead of “fixing and not fixing,” the tip of the nose being one of the points onto which adepts fix their gaze.

53 Tib. (B): “is established”; Tib. (DP): “is transformed.”

| gang phyir 'bras bu 'dra ba'i dbang |
 | btsan thabs [P104b] lhan cig skyes par 'dod |
 | yun ring dus su 'bral med gnas |
 | ma bcos pa yi tshogs¹ yin no | 6.20

¹ B *tshogs pa*

Therefore the forceful empowerment which resembles the fruit
 Is [here] taken to be the co-emergent.
 To remain without disconnection [from the co-emergent] for a long time
 Is an uncontrived accumulation [of merit and wisdom].

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Abbreviations for Sanskrit Sources

- CMU *Caturmudropadeśa* (Tibetan translation)
 — B: Dpal spung block print of the *Phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung*, vol. *hūm*, 9a1–13b1.
 — D: Derge Bstan 'gyur 2295, *rgyud*, vol. *shi*, 211b4–214b5.
 — P: Peking Bstan 'gyur 3143, *rgyud 'grel*, vol. *tsi*, 231a1–234a5.
 SU *Sekoddeśa* (Tibetan translation)
 Ed. by Orofino 1994:54–122. Sanskrit reconstructed by Raniero Gnoli in Orofino 1994:131–151.
 SUṬ *Sekoddeśaṭkā*
 Ed. By Francesco Sferra. Serie Orientale Roma 99. Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente 2006, 61–207.
 SS *Sthitisamāsa*
 — NGMPP reel nos. B 24|4 and 25|15
 — Tibetan translation:
 B: Dpal spungs block print of the *Phyag chen rgya gzhung*, vol. *om*, fols. 179b2–189b1.
 D: Derge Bstan 'gyur (Tōh. 2227), *rgyud 'grel*, vol. *wi*, fols. 92a6–99b5.
 P: Peking Bstan 'gyur (3071), *rgyud 'grel*, vol. *mi*, fols. 99a5–107a8.

- HT *Hevajratantra*
Ed. (together with the *Hevajrapañjikā Muktvāvalī*) by Ram Shankar Tripathi and Thakur Sain Negi (Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica 48). Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2001.

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