

PREFACE

Sāgaramati, all phenomena are marked by the seal (*mudrā*) of liberation;
They do not exist as duality but are pure.

Sāgaramatiparipṛcchāsūtra

Son of a noble family, all phenomena
Are marked by the seal of emptiness.

Maitreyaprasthānasūtra

Given that it impresses its seal on the three [other] seals, it is both great and a seal.

Rāmapāla, *Sekanirdeśapañjikā*

Perhaps there is no better simile for the emptiness of all phenomena than a ‘seal of emptiness’ that is so great in scope that it leaves its mark on each and everything in the universe. Taken in this way, explains Karma bKra shis chos ‘phel, a disciple of Kong sprul Blo gros mtha’ yas (1813-1899), the great seal is indeed found in the *sūtras*, namely as the seal of liberation or the seal of emptiness. This of course represents one of many attempts to read into earlier exoteric Buddhist scriptures an idea that had since taken on a life of its own in Buddhist tantric and siddha discourses, namely, the possibility of a direct liberating access to luminous emptiness even without formal tantric practice. Thus, with the help of a qualified master, *mahāmudrā*’s all-pervading presence can shine through anything at any moment. Kong sprul calls it essence *mahāmudrā*, it being a direct, unmediated path, independent of the *sūtras* and *tantras*. It can be combined with the latter two, the result being

what is called *mantra-mahāmudrā* and *sūtra-mahāmudrā*. In the eyes of bKra shis chos ‘phel, Rāmapāla (one of the four heart disciples of Maitrīpa) precisely intends this by stating that *mahāmudrā* impresses its seal on the three seals of tantric practice on the completion stage (i.e., *karmamudrā*, *dharmamudrā*, and *samayamudrā*). A combination with the sūtras can be discerned in Maitrīpa’s (986-1063) *Sekanirdeśa*: *mahāmudrā* is related there to the Madhyamaka-view of non-abiding and, according to Rāmapāla, to the practice of *amanasikāra*, mainly as described in context of the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* (i.e., the abandonment of hindering characteristic signs). In his *Amanasikārādhāra*, Maitrīpa analyzes *amanasikāra* also as "mental engagement (*manasikāra*) for which the letter *a* [in front of it] is the main [focus]." When it is understood thus—that one directs one’s attention (*manasikāra*) to the letter *a* as the main [focus]—“*a*” can no longer be the simple privative, but must stand for a more profound negation, such as the one implied by emptiness or non-origination (*anutpāda*). In his conclusion of the *Amanasikārādhāra*, Maitrīpa even equates the privative *a*, and thus non-arising and emptiness, with ‘luminosity’; and *manasikāra* with the tantric concept of ‘self-empowerment’. In final analysis, *amanasikāra* not only means to withdraw one’s attention from the characteristic signs of conceptually created duality, but the privative *a* also stands for ‘non-arising’ and ‘luminosity’; and *manasikāra* for ‘self-empowerment [within this luminosity]’.

This blend of *mahāmudrā* and Madhyamaka can be already discerned in (the tantric) Nāgārjuna’s *Caturmudrānvaya*, where two quotations from the *Jñānālokālaṃkāra* on *amanasikāra* and non-abiding are probably inserted into the definition of *mahāmudrā*. This connection with Madhyamaka elements is subsequently fully exploited in Maitrīpa’s *Sekanirdeśa*, which is directly based on the *Caturmudrānvaya*. Thus the eight verses of the *mahāmudrā* section in the *Sekanirdeśa* are pure Madhyamaka, namely the strand of it which was labelled Apratiṣṭhāna (“non-abiding”).

This raises the question whether such a Madhyamaka view and *amanasikāra* practice presuppose a full-fledged empowerment or not. ‘Gos Lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1392-1481), for example, points out with reference to Jñānakīrti’s *Tattvāvatāra* that a diligent practitioner of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā* can experience *mahāmudrā* in Pāramitānaya al-

ready at the level of an ordinary being, and that Maitrīpa's *Tattvadaśaka* is best characterized as a teaching that is (1) Pāramitānaya in essence, (2) in accordance with Mantranaya, and (3) called *mahāmudrā*.

It was mainly with the aim of investigating possible Indian precedents of *sūtra*-, or rather, *pāramitā*-based *mahāmudrā* that I first undertook, in 2005, the task of analyzing the works of Maitrīpa and his disciples in the context of a DFG project at the University of Hamburg. My research resulted in some preliminary observations (see Mathes 2011 & 2013) and the translations of three key texts: the *Tattvadaśaka* (Mathes 2006), the *Caturmudrānvaya* (Mathes 2009) and the *Amanasikārādhāra* (Mathes 2010). As the significance of Maitrīpa's works became increasingly apparent, I eventually decided to translate the **Advayavajrasaṃgraha* in its entirety, including in it revised translations of these three texts. The result is the present monograph which makes available for the first time in a Western language the complete cycle of Maitrīpa's *amanasikāra* texts together with an edition of the Tibetan in the light of a new edition of the Sanskrit. There are two exceptions. One is the *Kudṛṣṭinirghātana* of which I translated only the introduction, since Glenn Wallis had already published a good and reliable English translation. The second is the *Sekanirdeśa*. In view of the forthcoming monograph on this text by Harunaga Isaacson and Francesco Sferra, I have translated only the verses which are relevant for my study (SN 26-36).

It is my pleasure to acknowledge my profound debt to Thrangu Rinpoche, Khenpo Losäl (Namo Buddha), and HH Chetsang Rinpoche, who assisted me continuously and in many ways during my translation work and research. Khenpo Phuntsok from the Lekshay Ling Institute in Kathmandu helped me most competently in translating passages from Maitrīpa's **Caturmudropadeśa* and **Kāropa's* commentary on the *Caturmudrānvaya*. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Prof. Dr. Harunaga Isaacson (Hamburg) for having opened the door to the philological analysis of Indian *mahāmudrā* texts. I still fondly recall the long meetings in Hamburg during which Harunaga helped me to edit and analyze difficult passages, especially in some parts of the *Amanasikārādhāra*. It was also an "auspicious coincidence" (*rten 'brel bzang po*) that after having returned from Dehra Dun to Hamburg where I had been translating the Tibetan version of Rāmapāla's *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* under the guidance of Chetsang Rinpoche, I could improve relevant parts of my

translation with the help of Harunaga and Prof. Dr. Francesco Sferra, who were teaching in class the original Sanskrit of the *Sekanirdeśa-pañjikā*. Since Harunaga and Francesco are about to publish a critical edition and translation of this commentary, I quote it only when absolutely necessary.

Many thanks also to the Pandits of the Nepal Research Centre in Kathmandu, most of all Prof. Dr. Diwakar Acharya (now Univ. of Kyoto) and Nirajan Kafle, who both helped me in various ways, especially in deciphering difficult *akṣaras* and improving the Sanskrit texts reproduced in the edition. I also express my gratitude to Philip Pierce (Kathmandu) and Dr. David Higgins (Univ. of Vienna) for carefully reading through the manuscript and improving the English. Thanks are also due to Gabriele Coura for reformatting the entire manuscript. Finally I would like to thank the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) for enabling me to conduct the present translation and study in the first place by supporting me for four years in Hamburg with a research project.

Vienna, May 2015

Postscript: After my book was completed, Harunaga Isaacson's and Francesco Sferra's publication (*The Sekanirdeśa of Maitreyanātha (Advayavajra) with the Sekanirdeśapañjikā of Rāmapāla. Critical Edition of the Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts with English Translation and Reproductions of the MSS (Manuscripta Buddhica 2)*). Naples: Università degli Studi Napoli "L'Orientale"), appeared. Since Francesco Sferra had already kindly provided me with their Sanskrit edition of the *Sekanirdeśapañjikā* in January 2015, I was able to quote it in my analysis of the *Sekanirdeśa*.