

## Blending the Sûtras with the Tantras: Maitrîpa's role in the formation of *Sûtra Mahāmudrā* in the Kagyu Schools

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In defence of their *pāramitā*-based pith-instructions which enable a beginner to work with direct perceptions of the luminous nature of mind in a not specifically Tantric context, Kagyu scholars usually refer to a cycle of Maitrîpa works called “free from mentally engaging” (Skt. *Amanasikāra*) and the related works of his disciples, especially the *Tattvāvatāra* by Jñanakîrti and the *Tattvadaōakatîkā* by Sahajavajra. These works reflect the latest developments in Indian Buddhism, which may be characterized as a genuine attempt to incorporate the Tantric teachings of the Mahāsiddhas into the more traditional mainstream Mahāyāna. But why did these teachings remain so controversial in Tibet, especially among the pre-eminent masters of the Sakya school?

It was not so much the free use of Tantric concepts such as “union into a pair” (*zung 'jug*), “luminosity” (*'od gsal*) or *mahāmudrā*, what made Maitrîpa's *amanusikāra* cycle and its Indian commentaries revolutionary, but the claim that the path of *mahāmudrā* meditation is already contained in the Sûtras in a hidden form, and that it is thus possible, and even advisable, to follow the Tantric approach of directly cognizing luminosity on the Sûtra level. In other words, what really became controversial, was the introduction of a Sûtra-based path that was as direct and effective as Tantra, even without Tantric initiations and commitments.

It will be shown how Sahajavajra justifies such an approach by referring to the *Ratnagotravibhāga* and the *Avikalpapraveōadhāraṇi* in his commentary on Maitrîpa's *Tattvadaśaka*.