

THE LIFE OF THE SIDDHA-PHILOSOPHER MAITRIGUPTA

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In Nepalese Sanskrit and Tibetan sources, the life of this Buddhist author of eleventh-century India is a tale of vision, renunciation and quest. Maitrīgupta (a.k.a. Maitrīpa, Advayavajra) leaves academic life to seek a tantric guru among tribal people in the hills. A series of bizarre and nearly salacious lessons serves to cleanse his intellectual vision. He returns to the Middle Country to expound the lessons as a philosophic system called “nonattentiveness” (*amanasikāra*), a version of the Great Symbol (*mahāmudrā*). Whether triumph or scandal, and whether Maitrīgupta subsequently prevails or is defeated in controversy with the logicians, seems to depend upon the historical tradition. Sectarian influence is striking in this regard, and the study informs our evaluation of Tibetan accounts of the period. The sources are presented in translation, with detailed examination.

INTRODUCTION

BUDDHIST TANTRISM WAS NOT CODIFIED into a spiritual system during its life in India, as was Śaivism by Abhinavagupta; its maturation came about in Tibet. During the last period of Buddhism in India, Tantrism represented a tendency that competed with monastic life. In part, this reflects an old Indian dualism of ordinary life versus withdrawal to the forest, with the complication that mundane existence came to be represented by the monastic universities of the North. Penetration of the academies by the tantras precipitated conflict on two fronts. Philosophically, the intuitive-ecstatic approach of the tantras was distasteful to many logicians of the late Mahāyāna. Ethically, some tantric practices found the monastery an inhospitable environment, because of its prohibition of liquor and women. These practices may have been devised, in fact, chiefly to establish the superiority of Vajrayāna to the morality of common religiosity.

Tantrism was eventually absorbed by Buddhist scholasticism. A genre of “three vows” texts attempts to coordinate the monastic code, the altruistic ethic of the bodhisattva, and tantric “pledges” (*samaya*). And some philosophers established a subordinate role for logical philosophy in the religious life. Before this occurred, however, a number of academics encountered the necessity to leave monastic life to pursue a spiritual career. The story of Nāropa (translated Guenther 1963) is a startling example. Another is the story of his contemporary, Maitrīgupta.

By practice of the lower tantras—meditation upon the bodhisattvas Tārā and Avalokiteśvara—Maitrīgupta

is inspired to seek a teacher. This guru he finds as a person called *śabara* (Tib. *ri khrod pa*), “mountain man,” because he dwells among a southern tribe of that name. This “lord of śbaras” (*śabareśvara*) possesses a set of teachings deriving from other siddhas, including the “great brahman” and author Saraha. He lives with two women (also from the North) who assist in the instruction of Maitrīgupta.

Through Maitrīgupta, a brahman by birth, we have the philosophy in literary form. These siddhas’ understanding of the way of things has not changed from Saraha to Maitrīgupta: their formulations upon Mādhyamika as elaborated by Nāgārjuna. Chiefly, their philosophic works are polemical in intent. The objects of Saraha’s ridicule (translated Snellgrove 1954)—the miscellany of religious lifestyles in India—may be compared to Maitrīgupta’s classifications of Buddhist philosophic schools and refutation of the logicians.

Maitrīgupta’s philosophic works (aside from his works on tantric practice) are classified as *sūtra*. The philosophy is based upon tantric yoga, however, and should be styled *sūtra-tantra syncretism*. Such is the general import of *mahāmudrā*, “great symbol.” Maitrīgupta calls his system *amanasikāra*, “nonattentiveness,” thus treating “attentiveness,” an ethically wholesome mental factor of *sūtra* soteriology, as a factor inimical to contemplative process. Such inversion of terminology is characteristic of tantric innovation.

A major source of yogic praxis is Vajrayoginī. She appears in the life of Maitrīpa and in associated texts. Maitrīgupta and his teacher, Śabara, were apparently

originators of the cult of the "adamantine female yogin," which spread with their disciples to Nepal and Tibet.

Identification of any *siddha* figure of the period has its difficulties, because the *siddhas* bear different names at stages of their lives. Maitrīgupta is known in Tibet as Maitrīpa (= Indic Maitrīpāda), and commonly also as Advayavajra (Tib. *gnyis med rdo rje*). The designation "avadhūtipāda"—describing a practitioner of the *yoga-tantras*—appears as well.

More serious a historiographical problem in the case is sectarian bias. The sources are mostly Tibetan. For the Tibetan historians of religion, "history" forms a handbook to the sacred canon. Much of the data that they present, therefore, constitutes inferences from texts and practices attributed to the figure in question. This has been demonstrated in a study of the seventh-century poet Candragomin (Tatz 1982). Figures from the eleventh century such as Maitrīgupta are in addition associated with one or another of the schools that developed in Tibet—schools that represent sides in the conflict, inherited from India, of forest versus academy. The historians' sources are oral traditions deriving from the period in question, but overgrown with legendary exaggeration or denigration.

Maitrīpa is associated with the Bka'-brgyud school as teacher of Marpa the Translator (*mar pa chos kyi blo gros*). Some sources make him a teacher of Atiśa (*dīpamkaraśrījñāna*), a forerunner of the Bka'-gdams-pa school; others make him an individual suspected of immoral tantric practices whom Atiśa expelled from academy. Upon examination, no connection at all between the two figures can be proven. The most methodical of Tibetan historians, the lama Tāranātha, approaches such associations critically. Having examined them at length in another publication, I treat them cursorily in this paper.

A control to Tibetan accounts of Maitrīgupta is available: a Nepalese palm-leaf manuscript. The Sham Sher manuscript (see References s.v.) contains biographies of the Amanasikāra and Vajrayoginī lineages, along with two meditative practices of Vajrayoginī. The life of Maitrīgupta ends in mid-career. From this, and from the paleography, I regard the manuscript as nearly contemporary to him; perhaps it was compiled by the figure named Sāgara who appears in it. The Sanskrit text of the biography may be found in a forthcoming paper (ref. n. 6 below). The scholars Sylvain Lévi and Giuseppe Tucci discovered the manuscript, independently, in the collection of General Kesar Sham Sher Jung Bahadur Rānā. They made hand-copies which they published in the year 1930, Lévi adding a rough translation. The original is now accessible in a photographic reproduction.

The 1959 study of Maitrīgupta by Hadano relies exclusively upon Tibetan sources.

Through section 5 below, the Sham Sher manuscript is the basis for this study. Further comments on historiography are included.

I. BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Right here, in the Middle Country, close by the great city of Lotus Kapilavastu, lay a village called Jhātakaraṇī.¹ In it dwelt a brahman couple named Nānukā and Sāvitri. In due course they had a son named Dāmodara.² Before the youth had grown to eleven years of age, he left home and became a "single staff" renunciate named Martabodha.³

Except for the *Life of Marpa*, all sources agree that Maitrīgupta was born and bred a brahman, and his further career as a scholar bears this out. Marpa says, beginning a song in praise of Maitrīpa (214.5, cf. tr. 26):

You took birth for the sake of the world
On Jambu Continent in the royal class.

And further on (245.4, tr. 62), Marpa sings of how his teacher renounced a kingdom for the religious life. But this is standard hagiographical fare deriving from the great renunciation made by Śākyamuni. Marpa's other main teacher, Nāropāda (a.k.a. Nāropa), also belongs to the royal (*kṣatriya*) class and renounces married life with a princess (ca. A.D. 1500; tr. Guenther 1963: ch. 1-2). The Marpa hagiography (composed circa A.D. 1505) apparently strays in this regard. *Marpa* follows the *Dohā* tradition of the lives of the *siddhas*: a tradition of tales told by generations of disciples and occasionally written down.⁴ The Sham Sher manuscript is itself such an account, but committed to writing early and free of Tibetan sectarian concerns.

¹ Padma-dkar-po (287:1): "He was born into the brahman class in the town of Gra-byi-la in the Middle Country (*yul dbus*)."
On the sense of Magadha at this time, see Majumdar 1943:165. The name of the town here may be part transliteration, part corrupted translation of the same Sanskrit original.

² The name has been corrupted, apparently, by Padma-dkar-po (287:2) into Dharma.

³ Cf. his first buddhist name, Dharmabodhi, according to Padma-dkar-po (287:5).

⁴ See, for example, the author's colophon to *Marpa*. Two of Marpa's students relate the account separately to two of their disciples. Then the two disciples combine on a written

So an anonymous, interlinear note to a history from the Kagyu school, the *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (A.D. 1565) by Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag, attributes the two lines by Marpa (above) to "well known works such as the *Dohā* history" (370:8–9). This (lost) *siddha* history is evidently not counted a reliable source by Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag himself, nor even by Padma-dkar-po, whose *Chos 'byung* (composed A.D. 1575, revised 1580) identifies the class as brahman,⁵ although it draws copiously from *siddha* tradition. And Tāranātha takes that tradition severely to task for sloppy scholarship, probably with his contemporary Padma-dkar-po in mind.⁶ As the premier *siddha* history known to us, that of Padma-dkar-po is prized in this study for its visionary accounts of spiritual practice: one might call it true to the heart of the matter. But Maitrīgupta's caste should be taken as brahman.

His region is unquestionably the Middle Country (= Magadha), parts of which could also be known, under Pāla rule, as Bengal.⁷

On the important question of his date, the *Blue Annals* (A.D. 1486) has this to say (Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag 745:6–7, cf. tr. 841–42):

Those of the upper [*stod* = West Tibetan] school of the Great Symbol (*phyag chen, mahāmudrā*) maintain that Maitrīpa was born in the year of the sheep, whereas those of the school of Ras-chung-pa maintain that he was born in the year of the dog and that he passed into nirvana at the age of seventy-eight.

These proposed birth-years could be 1007 and 1010, as the translator points out. They could also, however, fall twelve years (or twenty-four, etc.) on either side. The Upper School, deriving from Maitrīpa's Indian disciple Vajrapāṇi who went to Tibet ('Gos 843), is the older Hadano Hakukyū reckons the birth to fall one or two twelve-year cycles earlier, based

biography. To this are added anecdotes from others, and all is composed as hagiography: "an exemplar for sincere beings" (tr. 204).

⁵ Reference n. 1 above.

⁶ On this aspect of Tibetan historiography see my paper, "Maitrīpa and Ratnākaraśānti: The Validity of Siddha Historical Tradition," forthcoming in a volume to commemorate Burmiok Athing Densapa (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives).

⁷ See Schwartzberg 1978:21. Maitrīpa comes from ?Śarideśa in Bengal, according to a colophon cited by Shahidullah 1928:32; Naudou 1968:176n4.

upon his tutelage of Marpa and his association with Atiśa. But he probably errs in assigning the date 1006—rather than 1012—to the birth of Marpa, and the association with Atiśa is dubious.⁸

The Sham Sher manuscript (not known to Hadano) provides a solid association with Nāropāda. But the dates of this figure as well can be guessed only by association with his disciple Marpa.⁹ Likewise, the dates of Ratnākaraśānti and Jñānaśīmitra are known only by association with others.¹⁰ The positive association that Sham Sher makes between Maitrīgupta and Śabara as disciple and guru tells us nothing as to date, because it appears that the Śabara in this story is a phantom.

The careful historian Tāranātha (b. 1575), who tries to verify what Tibetans know by reference to contemporary oral tradition in India, establishes a chronology by reference to the line of Pāla kings. According to Tāranātha, Maitrīpa passed away at about seventy years of age (*Bka' babs* 17:5). He ties chronology to King Neyapāla (*India* 218:4–8, tr. 305): Maitrīpa passed away nine years after King Neyapāla acceded to the throne. His accession, according to the "authentic biographies" of Atiśa, was accomplished shortly before that teacher left for Tibet. Since Atiśa left India at about 1040 (Chattopadhyaya 1967: ch. 32), Maitrīpa died not later than 1049. This roughly accords with Hadano's reckoning of his birth date, if Maitrīpa lived to the age of seventy. But in that case, he cannot have been teacher to the Tibetan translator Marpa, whose journeys to Tibet began after the year 1055.¹¹

Whatever may be the "authentic biographies" of Atiśa that are known to Tāranātha, those that we possess do not mention the accession of Neyapāla.¹² If anything, they suggest an earlier accession. In section 159, Atiśa mediates between Neyapāla and a brahmanical king of the East named Karṇa. This war is attested by an inscription, and Karṇa is

⁸ On the dates of Marpa see *Life* 199–201n, discounting the reckonings by Guenther. On the association with Atiśa see ref. n. 12 below. Atiśa's arrival in Tibet in the year 1042 forms a crux for the reckoning of prior dates for 'Gos; see Chattopadhyaya 1967: App. D.

⁹ For the data on Nāropā see Nihom 1984:23n2 & refs.

¹⁰ References Ruegg 1981:122n405.

¹¹ *Marpa* xxvi. Marpa's journeys to India are confirmed by Bu-ston, *History* (A.D. 1347):908:6–7, tr. 2:218. See also the collaborative translation (with Maitrīpa) O 3282.

¹² The core of the biographies (collected by Eimer 1979) dates to ca. 1100, but the biographies are full of accretions. See my paper "Maitrīpa and Atiśa" forthcoming in the

identified with the Kālacuri king who ruled from 1041 to 1071 (Sircar 1977:965 & ref. n. 13). Furthermore, the letter written by Atiśa to Neyapāla (tr. Chattopadhyaya 1967:App.C, sec. 5, v. 1–2) seems to indicate that he had already ruled for some time. Neyapāla must have ruled earlier in the century.

Tāranātha also reports the general (probably, the *siddha*) tradition (*History* 221:19222:9, tr. 310): Maitrīpa and the disciples of Atiśa lived during the time of the grandsons of Neyapāla, named Hastipāla and Kṣānti, who ruled in turn for 29 years beginning with the 22nd year after the passing of Neyapāla.

Padma-dkar-po connects Maitrīpa with King Samunja (sec. 6 below), who is otherwise unknown.

Maitrīgupta's disciple Vajrapāṇi went to Nepal (Yer-pa = Patan) in the year 1066 (Sum-pa ed. LC 9:19), and afterward to Tibet ('Gos tr. 856, cf. 843). He was 50 years of age ('Gos, ibid.)

Another disciple, Rāmapāla, is taken by Dpa'-bot-sug-lag to have been a king—presumably, the son of Hastipāla¹³ and hero of the Bengali *kāvya* entitled *Rāmacarita* (Majumdar 1943:101, 311, 1155–66). Details concerning the king, as related by Tāranātha (*History* ch. 35, and more at Sum-pa 120:23–121:4) do not preclude identification with the warrior hero, but a clear distinction is made from the disciple, who was born in Karṇāṭaka in the South (Tar., *Bka'* 18:3–6). This does not explain why Rāmapala retained his un-buddhistic name.

Dates are not provided by the Sham Sher manuscript, but the stages of Maitrīpa's life are enumerated by years. By adding them (see the following table), it is clear that he began to teach in the Middle Country, at the behest of Śabara, only at the age of 53. If Marpa met Maitrīpa during his first journey to India (so *Life* 26–32), then Maitrīpa cannot have been born as late as 1007. But if he sought out Maitrīpa only on the third journey, Nāropa being then deceased and otherwise unavailable (so 'Gos 402), then 1007 becomes the latest possible birth year. The disciple Vajrapāṇi therefore studied for up to six years with

proceedings of the Fourth International Seminar on Tibetan Studies held at Munich in 1985.

The historian Sum-pa-mkhan-po (119:24 = LC 153:3) also states that Neyapāla acceded shortly after Atiśa left for Tibet, but he seems to be repeating what Tāranātha records. See also Chattopadhyaya 1967:319.

¹³ Dpa'-bo 371:14; so also Das, index to Sum-pa s.v. Rāmapāla. The disciple is author of O 3098, a commentary to O 3097 (= *Adv.* no. 5) by Maitrīpa.

Maitrīgupta (himself aged 53–59) before going to Nepal and Tibet. That explains why Vajrapāṇi composed no commentaries to works by Maitrīgupta, but translated compositions as they reached Tibet.

The proposed dates for Maitrīgupta, then, are A.D. 1007 through 1085. Hadano, basing himself upon the *Life of Marpa*, reckons otherwise (292–94), but that text is unreliable as a historical record.

The previous life of Maitrīpa is identified by Padma-dkar-po (286:6–287:1): "Some time before taking birth, he was known as the scholar (pañḍita) God of Victors (rgyal ba'i lha, jinadeva), or Protector Holding Conduct (spyod 'chang mgon po, caryadhāranātha), or Blazing Chief ('bar ba'it gtso bo¹⁴). The assertion of such a lineage parallel to the "proper" buddhist lineage by instruction has a sectarian significance; it may also be taken as an anachronistic extension to Indian figures of the Tibetan institution of reborn abbots.¹⁵

2. EDUCATION

Then having studied letters and Paninean grammar, he mastered all treatises within seven years. For some twenty years under good Nāro he studied the standards of knowledge, buddhist treatises beginning with the way of the perfections. Thereafter, he dwelt for five years with Rāgavajra, who knew the treatises of the way of mantra. Then for one year he studied the Nirākāra system before the great scholar Ratnākaraśānti, the reverend guru. Then he went to Vikramāśīla and for two years studied under good Jñānaśrīmitra his Chapter [on Sākārvāda]. Then he went to Vi-kramapura and became the monk Maitrīgupta of the Saṃmatīya order.

This also is prefaced, in the *History* of Padma-dkar-po, by an assertion of his previous rebirth (287:2–4):

With great wisdom by virtue of his rebirth, he entered a heterodox (*tīrthika*) grammar school and learned Paninean grammar, and then the entire heterodox philosophic systems (*siddhānta*) within nine years. In fact, his learning stretched far beyond these. He was given the name "triple staff" (*tridandin*).

¹⁴ Perhaps a mistranslation of *jvālamukha*, "blazing mouth."

¹⁵ For the caustic comments of Tāranātha see *India* 217:16–218:4, tr. 304–5, tr. also my paper n. 6 above.

Career of Maitrīgupta
According to the Sham Sher Manuscript

to age	years	name	place	occupation
11	11	Dāmodara	Jhātakarāṇī	youth
18	7	Martabodha	?wanderer	“single staff”
38	20	”	?Phullahari	student of Nāropāda
5	43	”	?	student of Rāgavajra
1	44	”	?	student of Ratnākaraśānti
2	46	”	Vikramaśīla	student of Jñānaśīmitra
4	50	Maitrīgupta	Vikramapura	practice of Tārā
1	51	”	Khasarpaṇa	practice of Avalokiteśvara
1	52	”	Śrī Dhānya	?
1	53	Advayavajra	Northwest	student of Śabara

Compare the nine years' studies with the “seven years” of the Sham Sher manuscript, and note the promotion from “single” to “triple staff.”

The conversion by Nāropa is dramatized by a debate in the two Kagyu histories. Dpa'-bo (370:7–11):

After completing the study of grammar, he debated with Nāropa, who was victorious; so he served that teacher. After completing the study of brahmanical rules and observances, he took ordination under Śāntipa (= Ratnākaraśānti). He became known as Maitrī, “the loving.” He was unmatched in his erudition of the five fields of learning.¹⁶

Padma-dkar-po provides still more detail (287:3–288:2):

His paternal aunt was consort (*phyag rgya* = *mudrā*) to Nāropa. She said to him: “Heterodox doctrine conduces to achievement in this life or in heaven, but it does not transcend samsara; that is why it is not Buddhism. Listen therefore to the doctrine of Śrī Nāropa.”

And she said, “Debate with him, and let the one who is defeated be converted.” Led to Nāropa, he laid a wager with him on his teaching, and debated. Nāropa was victorious, and he (i.e., Maitrīpa) cast off his robes of heterodoxy. He was named Dharmabodhi.¹⁷ He was initiated into Śārvava, Hevajra and

so forth. His tantric name was Vajrarāga.¹⁸ He learned much philosophy (*mtshan nyid*, *pramāṇa*) and tantra.

He was told, “Now let you resort to one consort and cultivate [yourself] in the forest hills. He replied, “I seek no *mudrā*. I will not cultivate in the forest hills. Let me attend eminent lectures.” So he joined Ṭṛtacintamaṇi, teacher of Ratnākaraśānti-pa.¹⁹ There he heard Mind-only for one year.

Then in the land of Kapaki²⁰ he met Śāntipa and took higher ordination (**upasainpadā*). He was named Maitrīgupta, and he studied the three collections (**tripitaka*).

If he studied non-tantric subjects under Nāropāda (Sham Sher ms., Dpa'-bo), the site may have been the University of Nālandā. Tāranātha (15:2–3):

Maitrīgupta was a brahman, a heterodox scholar. Later, he met Nāropa and became a buddhist. He requested initiations and instruction. Taking monastic ordination at Nālandā, he attended many learned and accomplished gurus, headed by Ratnākaraśāntipa, thereby becoming a great scholar. Then he dwelt at Vikramaśīla (“The Manner of Subduing”) Monastery.

If Maitrīpa practiced tantra under Nāropāda, on the other hand (Padma-dkar-po), it must have been

¹⁶ Compare the name of his second teacher, Rāgavajra, according to the Sham Sher ms. (cited above).

¹⁷ Otherwise unknown.

²⁰ Perhaps Kākatīya, a dynasty that was vassal to the Cālukyas from ca. 1035 and independent from ca. 1158, controlling an area including Śīparvata. See Schwartzberg 1978: loc. E6; p. 147.

¹⁶ The five fields of learning (*vidyā-sthāna*) are, according to the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*: grammar, logic buddhist philosophy, medicine, and crafts. (Edgerton 1953 s.v.)

¹⁷ See n. 3 above.

later in Nāropāda's career, at the hermitage of Phullahari. Tāranātha (above) indicates that he studied tantra as well as general philosophic treatises.²¹ Evidently, the Tibetans have conflated his teacher Rāgavajra with the better-known Nāropāda. According to the Sham Sher manuscript, both must have dwelt at Nālandā. In either case, Maitrīpa has not yet been initiated into the higher tantras. Padma-dkar-po underscores that lower status with the anecdote of his refusal to take a consort—a purism not conducive to liberation from conceptual attachment.

If the role of Nāropa in some sources illustrates conflation, the appearance of Ṭṛacintamaṇi, who is otherwise unknown, deflates the importance of Ratnākaraśānti. His differences with Ratnākaraśānti are consequently less damaging to Maitrīpa, according to Padma-dkar-po, because the latter was a fellow student as well as his teacher.

The account of Sham Sher—that Maitrīpa studied the two schools of the Mind-only position in turn—is corroborated by his works, in which he refutes both.²²

All Tibetan sources seem to conflate Vikramapura with Vikramaśīla.²³

3. RENUNCIATION OF MONASTIC LIFE

For four years [at Vikramapura] he studied sūtra, abhidharma and vinaya; he recited ten million mantra-recitations in the way of Tārā according to the *Pañcakrama*, endowed with the meaning of the four symbols (*mudrā*).²⁴

²¹ The term "instruction" *gdams ngag* refers to teachings of a general nature; tantric instruction would be *khrid*.

²² On the Nirākāra and Sākāra theories see Ruegg 1981: App. 2. For refutation of both see e.g., Advayavajra, *Tattvadāśaka* v. 2.

The "Chapter" (*prakarana*) by Jñānaśrīmitra that he studies (Sham Sher) may be one of the Sanskrit works published by Thakur (1959).

²³ Vikramapura is probably the modern Bikrampur in the region of Dacca (Schwartzberg 1978: loc. H5), the site of a monastery and birthplace of Atiśa (Chattopadhyaya 1967:22, 36). There is no indication that Atiśa dwelt there as a monk. See also Majumdar 1943:183.

Vikramaśīla was founded by King Dharmapāla, according to Sum-pa-mkhan-po (113:2–4, ed. LC 144:2–23), "In northern Magadha on the peak of a hill on the bank of the Ganges" (following Tāranātha; see *History* tr. 274–75). See also Schwartzberg 1978: index s.v.; Roerich 1958:12, 64; Majumdar 1943:417; *JBORS* (1941):27:3:385.

²⁴ See La Vallée Poussin 1896: ch. 2 on *mantrajapa*.

The reverend said to him in a dream: "Go to Khasarpaṇa." Quitting the monastery, he went to Khasarpaṇa and stayed there for one year.

Then he spoke again in a dream: "Go now, son of the family, to the South, to the twin mountains Manobhaṅga and Cittaviśrāma, where dwells the lord of Śabarās. He will favor you there [with instruction]. And you will meet someone named Sāgara on the road there. He is a prince of the land of Rādhā. Go together with him."

Dream is an inspiration for Maitrīpa's quest, and a forum for subsequent attainment, in the accounts by Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag and Padma-dkar-po as well. Two works by Maitrīgupta on the examination of dreams survive.²⁵ In all Tibetan versions the renunciation is clouded, however, by accounts of an expulsion by Atiśa or Ratnākaraśānti. Upon examination, these reports show little value as history. They originate in the biographies of Atiśa and seem to be inspired by sectarian concerns, especially an antipathy to the view of the early Bka'-brgyud school that an academic monastery may be a poor environment for spiritual realization.²⁶

Padma-dkar-po reports the dispute with Ratnākaraśānti. Here Maitrīpa expounds a Madhyamaka viewpoint opposed to his teacher's Mind-only philosophy (288:2–289:3):

There [at Kapaki] Maitrīpa upheld "not taking a stand",²⁷ Śāntipa upheld "the aspect is false" (*rnam rdzun pa = nirākāra*). They held a discussion, and since Maitrīpa upheld what was right,²⁸ his teacher was angered: he stripped off his religious robes and threw them out the door. [Maitrīpa] salvaged some bits of cloth from a pile of sweepings in the doorway, and stayed not far from there, in the temple of Delightful (*abhinanda) Tārā, praying for seven days to Tārā. In a pre-dawn dream appeared a beautiful girl of sixteen years. She declared, "Avadhūtipa, do not stay here. In the East, in the Monastery of Inexhaustible Cowries (Khasarpaṇa), dwells Avalokiteśvara. You will receive a prophecy by him." And then she disappeared.

²⁵ O 2951, 3077 = *Adv.* 10.

²⁶ For details see the papers referred to in n. 6, 12 above.

²⁷ "Not taking a stand": *apratiṣṭhāna*. See Ruegg 1981:59–59, esp. 58n174 and ref. to Advayavajra, *Tattvaratnāvalī*.

²⁸ So reading *bzung*. Perhaps (text) *bzang*: "Since Maitrīpa had a good intellect . . ."

From that sleeping place he went by stages to Khasarpaṇa, and dwelt there praying to the Great Compassionate One. A year passed. He fell into a light sleep in the pre-dawn, and a stiff white man appeared in a dream. He said, “Avadhūtipa, do not stay here. Go to the South. At a place five and a half months distant from here called Śrīparvata-Manobhanga-Cittaviśrāma (dpal gyi ri yid pham pa sems ngal gso ba zhes bya ba) dwells the lord of Yogins, Śabari and consorts. Go there, and all your incomprehension, wrong thinking, and doubt will be dispelled.”

Then he took the name Avadhūtipa.

In the Sham Sher manuscript, Maitrīgupta is urged to quit monastic life apparently by Avalokiteśvara. That Tārā first addresses him according to Padma-dkar-po makes more sense, in that he has been reciting Tārā mantras. Nevertheless, the role of Tārā here seems to be drawn from the story of Maitrīpa’s expulsion by Atiśa, which Padma-dkar-po must know although he does not relate it. Tārā appears before Atiśa to censure him for the act of expulsion.

The expulsion (for keeping liquor and a woman in his cell) is reported in finest detail by Dpa’-bo-gtsuglag. Maitrīpa then goes to Khasarpaṇa, where he is taken ill and examines his dreams (370:10–20):

“You will be favored by guru Sarahapa at Mount Manibhaga (*sic*),” they said. In other places as well he examined [his dreams]: he saw the three-peaked Mount Manibhaga and the lord of Śabaras, deep purple, bearing the upper and lower carcass of a pig on a bamboo bow, attended by two female yogins.

To summarize his progress thus far: after many years of studying mahayanist and tantric treatises under Nāropāda and Rāgavajra, and reviewing the two Mind-only philosophies under its leading proponents, Maitrīgupta goes to Vikramapura to be ordained a Saṃmatīya monk. There he studies primary sources (*tripitaka*) and performs lower-tantra practice with Tārā as obligational deity.²⁹ The fruition of this practice is a visitation by Avalokiteśvara in dream. He instructs Maitrīgupta to go to Khasarpaṇa.

After one year of Avalokiteśvara practice there, he is further instructed to seek Śabari.

(He then takes the name Avadhūtipa, according to Padma-dkar-po. That is to say, he begins the higher-tantra practice of winds and channels, perhaps involving sexual yoga.³⁰)

Khasarpaṇa is the name of a form of Avalokiteśvara and the site of a monastery (*gtsug lag khang*, Tāranātha) or temple (*lha khang*) housing a spontaneously arisen statue of him (*Marpa* 212:7–213:1, tr. 25). (The name is understood as “inexhaustible cowries”; see the story of its founding, several centuries earlier, at Tāranātha, *History* 132, tr. 193–94). The location is probably Pundravardhana forest of the Vārendra district of northern Bengal.³¹

Tāranātha reluctantly tells the story of the expulsion by Atiśa. Then he provides this straightforward reason for departure (*Bka’babs* 15:7):

There [at Vikramaśila] his capabilities had become measureless, yet he had but little comprehension of reality. Following the prediction of an obligational deity, he proceeded to Śrīparvata to seek Śabari (śābāripa).

4. QUEST

Then going [to the South], he met with Sāgara, who knew nothing of Manobhaṅga and Cittaviśrāma because he came from the North. He went to Śrī Dhānya and stayed there for one year. Then he returned to the North and set about to practice Tārā with her blessing. After one month he had a dream:

³⁰ Because several figures of the period bear that name, the appearance here of the designation “Avadhūtipa” is not evidence that Maitrīgupta authored works thus attributed in the Tibetan canon.

³¹ So Maitrīpa travels east (from Vikramaśila) to Khasarpaṇa according to Padma-dkar-po, but not far from Vikramapura according to Sham Sher.

No reference to the place appears in Schwartzberg 1978; (plate IV.4, “religious and cultural sites” of the period, is inadequate overall). Khasarpaṇa is located one day’s journey south of the capital of King Śubhasāra and fourteen days (north, presumably) from Potala; it is identified as Pundravardhana hills (Tāranātha, *History* idem.) See also ibid. 183, tr. 257: the border of Magadha with the East; Majumdar 1943:182–83 and at *IHQ* 16 (1940):221. Bu-ston names Khadira (seng ldeng) Forest (853:3, tr. 2:156; cp. 855:1, 2:157), but this must refer to the trees. Marpa (idem.) travels east from Phullahari in the North.

²⁹ “Obligational deity”: *iṣṭadevata*, *yi dam*. That a Saṃmatīya monk practices tantra as a virtual fourth *piṭaka* (Sham Sher) may support the contention of Saṃkṛtyāyana that the origins of tantra are to be located in that school (*JĀ* 225 [1934]:217).

"Go now, son of the family, to the Northwest where two mountains stand. You will arrive in fifteen days."

On the reverend Tārā's advice he went northwest with a caravan. At the journey's end, one man said: "This very morrow you will reach Manobhaṅga and Cittaviśrāma. There your stay will be pleasant." The good scholar thrilled to hear this, and on the next day he arrived.

The manuscript surprises, but it is probably not in error, when Avalokiteśvara directs him to two mountains [at Śrī Dhānya] in the South, and Tārā later directs him to the Northwest. Padma-dkar-po may be correcting the tradition when he locates [Śrī] Dhānyakaṭaka in the Southwest and the two mountains a long but unspecified distance from there (perhaps, overseas) alongside Mount Glory, *śripavata*.

The urge of Tibetan historians to connect the two mountains with a known locale is understandable, and Śripavata may even be correct. To understand the life of Maitrīgupta, however, we should first establish that the mountains—whose names mean "depressed mind" and "thought relaxed"—are deliberately dissociated from a cartographic topography. the journey is a spiritual quest in which disorientation prepares the scholar for a new kind of endeavor. When he finally arrives, he does not know whether the guru is flesh-and-blood.³²

Dhānya(kaṭaka) is located in the southeast, in Cālukya-Kākatiya country near the delta of the Kṛṣṇa River. Śripavata is a range of mountains, and a settlement, up river (or northwest). The tribal inhabitants are called *śabara*.³³ Tāranātha, in the *History*, consistently treats Śrī Dhānyakaṭaka as a shrine on "the island of Dhanasī" (e.g., tr. 192), but pilgrims could easily gain that impression from the crossing of a wide river. The area had by this time supported tantric practice, both buddhist and śaivite, for several centuries.³⁴ Yogins gave the peaks affectionate names derived from yoga. The "lord of śabarās" (the son of actors, his original name unknown) had retired to

Manobhaṅga and Cittaviśrāma "as places for practice and [has] dwelt there, taking on the aspect of a *śabara*" (Lévi 422, Tucci 150). Tāranātha records the name Manubhaṅga (sic) as the last, mythic residence of Candrakīrti according to *siddha* tradition.³⁵ Marpa is transported to Śripavata in the South" to visit Saraha and his consorts, but only in a dream (*Life* tr. 44–45).

According to Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag, Maitrīgupta travels south by sea (370:20–22):

He performed religious services for a party of merchants going to sea, and at length came to the South. When Mount Deva (*ri de wa*) appeared in accordance with the dream, he disembarked.

Sakara, his companion, is introduced later.

Sāgara, who will function as a model of devotion, is mentioned (as Sāgarasiddhi) in the *Blue Annals* ('Gos tr. 869) among those (including Maitrīpa) who taught Mahāmudrā to Pha-dam-pa-sangs-rgyas. He appears as "Sakara" in the *Lives of the Eighty-four Siddhas*, a flagrantly fictional *siddha* history. "Sakara" is there identified with Saroruha, who is also a *kṣatriya* who frequents Śrīdhana (sic) and Śripavata, but several centuries earlier (Robinson 1979:227–30).³⁶ Rādha, his birthplace according to Sham Sher, is a district of Bengal just south of Puṇḍravardhana (Schwartzberg 1978:32a).

Tāranātha also spells the name "Sakara" (*Bka' babs* 16:1).

The most detailed account, that of Padma-dkar-po, goes (289:3–290:1):

He travelled south for four months. Very tired, he rested in a shady place and fell asleep. when he awoke, a young monastic was sitting nearby.

"Whence come you? Where are you going?" he asked.

He (i.e., the young monastic) replied, "I am son to the western King of Gandhāra (?spes can), since

³² Ruegg suggests that Maitrīgupta travelled to Kashmir in connection with his purported rediscovery of the *Uttaratantra-śāstra* (1969:38). But this is not substantiated by a close reading of the *Blue Annals*; see 'Gos 308:4–6, tr. 347; discussion ref. n6 above.

³³ Schwartzberg 1978:34, Hoffmann 1973:138.

³⁴ Śripavata is a śaivite practice-site in the sixth century; see Stein 1900:1:83, 1:93 & refs. n267, 3:267–80. Śrī Dhānyakaṭaka is the site of the Buddha's teaching of the *Kālacakra* and other tantras; see Hoffmann 1973:136; Tāranātha, *History* tr. 345. On Śrī Lanka in the fourteenth century, the Vajrayāna is known as Vajrapavata; see Samkṛtyāya at

JA 225 (1934):214. Dhānyakaṭaka is earlier an important Mahāyāna site; see Samkṛtyāya, 207–8. Chattopadhyaya, following a note by Roerich, identifies Dhānyakaṭaka with Amāratāti (Tār., *History* tr. 192n68).

³⁵ Tāranātha, *History* 136:4, tr. 199. See also Sum-pa (identical mis-spelling) 95:3, ed. LC 119:1). In addition, an abbot of the 'Tshur-phu lineage has a vision of Mount Manibhaga; see 'Gos 473:4, tr. 543.

³⁶ On Sakara see also Samkṛtyāya at *JA* 225 (1934):224 no. 74; Tucci 1949:239 list I, no. 74. "Sāgaradatta" appears elsewhere in the Sham Sher manuscript as part of the lineage of Vajrayoginī; see Lévi 418, chart B.

ordained the novice Sakarasiṁha. I have received a prophecy that says, ‘Go to the South and find a precious one (*rin po che*). With him you will accomplish all your goals.’ So I am going there. But let us go to Śrīparvata (dpal gyi ri). The supreme lord of the forest hills (ri khrod dband phyug, śabareśvara) dwells there.”

“Agreed,” he said.

So they came to the land of Śrī Dhānyakaṭaka in the Southwest (sic). They met some merchants who were about to cross the ocean, and asked, “Where is Śrīparvata?”

They said, “It lies some thousand miles (*dpag tshad, yojana*) yet from here.” They explained what the way [or “road”: *lam*] was like, and so it was.

The designation “precious one” is not Indian.

5. INSTRUCTION BY THE LORD OF ŚABARAS

On the mountain he lived on bulbs, roots and fruit, making ten maṇḍalas daily. Then for ten days he mounted a slab of rock, legs crossed, and set about to fast with his mind one-pointed. On the seventh day there came a dream-vision. On the tenth day he was about to slice his neck when the vision came directly and gave him initiation. So he became Advayavajra.³⁷

For twelve days he composed the explanation of the four symbols and so forth of the *Pañcakrama*; in five days he added the instruction.³⁸ He played the vīṇā as exemplification of all *dharma*s.

* * *

Then to Padmāvalī and Jñānāvalī the lord of Śabaras granted the permission: “Demonstrate the illusion of deprivation of life.” Sāgara immediately generated an array of bodies.

The good scholar said, “Blessed One, why am I unable to create magically an array of bodies?”

The lord of Śabaras said, “Because of mental differentiation.”

The scholar said, “What is to be done? Let your honors inform me.”

* * *

Good Śabara said: “Achievement in this life is not for you; go publish the philosophy.”³⁹

Advayavajra said, “Blessed one, I am incapable; how shall I do it?”

You will do it here in this life from instruction of Vajrayoginī; from it the fruition will mature. Here is the instruction,”⁴⁰ he said, and the good reverend disappeared.

This is not a bow, nor wild game, nor a piglet;
This is the face of the full moon, not a beautiful woman;
With a magically created emanation for sake of the person in need,
He stands on a slab of rock, the emperor of Śabaras.

The lineage of Amanasikāra is complete as thus received.

This is the end of the biography contained in the Sham sher manuscript.

Although the Tibetan histories explicate these most important events of his life in a like manner, they differ in detail and warrant full presentation.

Closest in structure is the history by Dpa’-bo-gtsug-lag (370:22–371:10):

He ate the fruit of trees and searched. Falling ill then, he could not find that for which he searched. Thinking of advice given for the intermediate state, he prepared to commit suicide. Just then Sakara saw Śabari, as in the dream, and [Śabari] called out. Prostrating himself, he (i.e., Maitrīpa) cried, “I have been this way forever, worn out in being blocked from you by obscurations. I am in bondage whether I see you or not; I will be liberated whether I see you or not” and so forth, whereby there arose a special concentration.

He composed many texts, including the four-mudra instruction, the Dohā[-commentary], and the twenty verses on the Mahāyāna.⁴¹ Sakara was liberated and disappeared.

One day she⁴² shot an arrow and slew a wild pig that was going through the forest. When he recoiled at that, she declared:

In the forest of samsara that has no arising,
Runs the boar of ignorance.

³⁷ “Gave him initiation”: *sekāṁ dadāti*. For works on the subject see Advayavajra no. 5, 7 = O 3097 (and commentary by Rāmapāla, O 3098), 3088.

³⁸ Probably the work Advayavajra no. 4 = O 3087.

³⁹ Possibly a reference to Advayavajra no. 11 = O 3086, *Tattvaprakāśa*.

⁴⁰ The manuscript also relates in context of the lineage of Amanasikāra that Advayavajra will be blessed (*adhiṣṭhita*) by Vajrayoginī; see Lévi 422:17.

⁴¹ The three texts mentioned are Adv. no. 4 = O 3087, O 3101–2 (see Bagchi 1938), and Adv. 16 = O 3093.

⁴² Gender determined by comparison with Padma-dkar-po and Tāraṇātha.



“Šabaripa and Maitrīpa” (Tibetan block print)

Shooting the arrow of clear wisdom,
I slay the boar of ignorance.

Eat you of the flesh—nonduality,
Enjoy the corpse—the great bliss.

And she disappeared.

Then he prayed, “With this physical body born of karma, I lack the fortune of the teaching. Let an emanation body go to a low-class village known as Dhūti, for in it are found two old female novices flanking one male novice.”⁴³ And there he eliminated all false imputation in regard to the meditation instructions.

Once, when he had awakened from sleep, he found that he had forgotten all the doctrines [he had learned]. “I must kill myself” he thought, and he (i.e., Šabari) came in person through the sky. He (Šabari) declared,

Where does one find the knowing
Of doctrines that have not arisen?
Where does one find the forgetting
Of doctrines that have not ceased?

and so forth. And he told him, “Go to the Middle Country . . .”

This last incident occurs when he is already on his way to the Middle Country, according to Padma-dkar-po. This version illuminates the import of Maitrī-

pa’s “bondage and liberation” verse as conceptual error, by reporting a response by Šabara later on.

Padma-dkar-po (290:1–295:1):

There was Mount Glory, flanked by Mount Depression and Mount Relaxation. In the midst of the three mountains were the waterfalls Wild Water and Poison Water. A lengthy search there yielded nothing. Those three mountains had seven isles.⁴⁴ Staying on the Isle of Dreaming, he dreamed in a night-time dream of a black man, hair tied on top with split bamboo, body in jaunty posture, the upper and lower halves of the carcass of a pig tied to the ends of his bow, with a quiver of one bottom and two openings—each with five arrows—adorned with the juice of pomegranate, his lower garment formed with peacock feathers, his left hand at his heart holding a precious flask; a consort in huntress garb bearing the corpses of peacock and deer, another consort playing a bamboo flute, one on the left and the other on the right.⁴⁵

Then they went to the isle to meet him face to face. Skipping their regular meal they hurried on so as to come before him in person.

⁴⁴ “Isles”: *gling, dvīpa*. Compare the seven islands (*saptadvīpa*) of the Mount Meru world-system in the *Mahābhārata*, named Monier-Williams s.v. *dvīpa*. See also the southern mountain (*do ri = rdo ri?*) in a lake of boiling poison that is the residence of Śāntibhadra; *Marpa* 205–6, tr. 17–18.

⁴⁵ This description accords with that of mountain tribesman, *śabaras*, in Majumdar 1943:593.

⁴³ Dhūti stands for Avadhūti; the passage alludes metaphorically to yoga of the higher tantras.

Sakara saw him first. He (i.e., Śabari) called to the professor, who was overjoyed. He fell at his feet and cried, "Despite countless difficulties, I have not met you until now. Reverend, I beg you to take pity on me. I am liberated whether I see you or not. I am in bondage whether I see you or not."

He (Śabari) declared, "To what purpose do you seek for the mountain of Mental Relaxation? When mindfulness and discursiveness fade into nature (dbyings, dhātu), that very relaxation is I." And with that, he disappeared.

Seeking him one day on the Isle of Symbolism, he came upon one female yogin killing and eating lice, and the other shooting arrows in the forest and slaying wild pig. The latter said:

In the forest of samsara, the triple realm,
Runs the boar of ignorance;
Shooting the arrow of clear understanding,
I slay the boar of ignorance.

Eat you of the meat of nonduality.

Then she slew the deer that appeared, and said:

In the forest of samsara, the triple realm,
Runs the deer of subject-object;
Shooting the arrow of Mahāmudrā,
I slay the deer of subject-object.

Eat you of the meat of nonduality.

The scholar had no faith in that, so Śabari himself came and declared:

Nothing at all is born;
Nothing at all will die.
There is nothing that is bound;
There is nothing liberated.

Sakara believed that, and comprehension dawned in him. Maitrīpa doubted. The father-mother disappeared.

He sought them again. A female yogin was massaging the feet of Śabari on the isle of the upper level of Śripavata (dpal gyi ri'i stod gzhi'i gling). Seized by Maitrīpa, she requested instruction in doing massage. "I will teach you," he declared. "That is doubtful," replied the yoginī. "You may have been instructed, but do not teach when you do not believe." She thrust her foot upon his and vanished.

Seeking thereafter, a flask was placed to the crown of his head on the Isle of Initiation, and he was initiated as follows:

Whenever the original mind has been prepared,
The qualities of the guru enter one's heart;
Comprehending that, thrust the arrow and sing
the song,
The mantras and tantras are one, but they are
unseen.

Whosoever heart receives the guru's speech,
Sees the treasure that lies in the palm of his
hand;
The path of "nonattentiveness" mahāmudrā⁴⁶
Creates no hope for any result whatsoever.

Mahāmudrā is to comprehend the essence of
one's own thought;
Appearance here and now is none other than
one's own thought.

No status, such as the highest stage,⁴⁶ became evident, and he wondered whether obtainment of the initiation had been of any use. That is when Sakara said,

This is no bow, nor wild game, nor pig; these are
magical creations.

The jina Śabara who dwells on the highest hill
Is most beautiful in the world, like unto the full
moon;
With emanated form he disciplines all creatures.

Resort not to allopathic remedies,⁴⁷
For any virtue or misdeed:
Your own awareness is lion-like gnosis.

But he was not believed. So he prophesied:

"For twelve days on Dharma-Preaching Isle you will seek and believe in the *Anāvila* tantra like the sky, the *Guhyasamāja* tantra like the ocean, the *Hevajra* tantra like gnosis, the *Cakrasaṁvara* tantra like a blessing, the *Nāmasaṅgīti* tantra like a key, and all the cycle of *Dohā* doctrine of the teacher who has reached perfection. Then you will return. Because you have doubted in me, you will not obtain the highest accomplishment in this life. Be received by Vajrayoginī just before you die, and in the intermediate state you will obtain the highest accomplishment."

And with that, he disappeared.

⁴⁶ Read *mchog* for *chog*. "Highest stage" refers to the tenth bodhisattva stage in the system of the *Daśabhūmika* sutra. Initiation should constitute a short-cut to that rank.

⁴⁷ "Allopathic remedies": *mi mthun gnyen po*. Meditation on love to counteract animosity, on corpses to counteract lust, etc.; see *Visuddhimagga* ch. 3.

Awakening, he (Maitrīpa) found that the doctrines he had requested from the śabari (ri khrod pa), by being over-pondered, had all been forgotten.

"To go back now," he thought, "I would be ashamed before people. Shall I kill myself?"

The śabari came before him and said, "Maitrīpa, what is wrong?"

"I have forgotten all the doctrine, and now contemplate suicide."

"Advayavajra-Avadhūtipa:

Where can one find what is called
"Forgetting doctrines that have not arisen?"
Where can one find what is called
"Forgetting doctrines that have not ceased?"

The three realms are liberated from the outset;
We are obscured only by ignorance.
The bliss of the wheel (cakraśamvara) is the highest pleasure;
The very nature of not having arisen.

Comprehension dawned in Maitrīpa; he perceived the gnosis of the first stage without obscuration. All the deeds of the professor of the three mountains and his consorts (*phyag rgya, mudrā*) he understood to be signs pointing to the essential meaning. He made his comprehension an offering to the guru, declaring:

Phenomena are all emptiness;
Emptiness together with compassion
Are the nondual teacher;
Apprehending the original meaning,
However one acts is liberated.

"I have comprehended the meaning that is free from objectification, uncontrived, lacking the slightest self-conscious mindfulness. Now there is no one I need question."

Taking the name Vajra of Nonduality (gnyis med rdo rje, advayavajra), he went on to the Middle Country.

The companion "Sakara" proves to be an emanation of Śabara in this account, but there is evidence beside that of the Sham Sher manuscript that Sāgara is a separate individual.⁴⁸ The version reported by Padma-dkar-po suggests the interesting possibility that Sāgara, being the speaker of the "he is a magical creation" verse, is the narrator of the Sham sher account. So the tale ends with Advayavajra's return to the Middle Country because Sāgara remains in the forest hills. The account of Maitrīgupta in Sham Sher seems to be contemporary, because it is more clear

and detailed than are preceding accounts of Śabara and the earlier lineage.

Whereas the dates of Maitrīgupta can be reckoned in proximity to Tibetans, we cannot deduce from them a period for Śabara. The manuscript presents him as a vision.⁴⁹ In the account by Tāranātha, the local people describe him as an accomplished one (siddha) of the past. Sum-pa refers to him as a "rainbow body," but this probably follows Tāranātha: the companion Sakara is liberated and becomes a rainbow body. Marpa also refers to the Śabari met by Maitrīpa as an emanation or magical creation (*sprul pa, nirmita*; 215:5, tr. 28). And "he still lives [on Śripavata] today," according to Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag (370:7) and Padma-dkar-po (147:6).

'Gos lotsāva gives this chronology, in context of the oral tradition of *Cakrasamvara* (393:1-2, tr. 451): Saraha appeared 300 years after the nirvana of the Buddha, he was met by Śabari 300 years thereafter, and Maitri-pa met Śabari 2400 years after that.⁵⁰

The question is complicated by the name Saraha, or Saraha the Younger, given to Śabara.⁵¹ Marpa meets "Saraha the great brahman" when he flies to Śripavata (carried by two brahman girls) for instruction in Mahāmudrā. His proper name is not retained anywhere.

The female yogins who accompany Śabara, Padmāvalī and Jñānāvalī, are not named by Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag or Padma-dkar-po, although Padma in another context (147:4) identifies them as sisters. Tāranātha essays to do so in a preceding account of Śabara: (*Bka' babs* 11:6-12:1, tr. 8, Schieffner 19-20):

The two consorts were named Logi and Guni. Tibetans claim that these two were later known as the dākinīs Padmavarti and Jñānavarti, the exponents of mahāmudrā symbolism and of *Dohā*. He dwelt with

⁴⁸ Bhattacharya attempts to date Maitrīpa ca. 978-1030 by reference to earlier members of the *Dohā* line (1968:xci-xcii). By contrast, the dating ca. 657 for Śabara by Hanson (1977:71 no. 40) recognizes a lapse of some centuries to his student Maitrīpa. The Vajrayoginī lineage in Sham Sher indicates that Śabarānātha and Sāgara are much earlier than Maitrīpa (Lévi, 423, cp. 419 list IIIB).

Saṅkṛtyāyana dates Śabara 8-9th centuries by relationship to Saraha; see *JA* 225 (1934):220, 225-26.

⁵⁰ On dating in the *Blue Annals* see 'Gos, Introd. In the same place, 'Gos declines to discuss oral traditions for which he has not received an initiation. For comments on history by genealogy in Indo-Tibetan tradition see Helmut Hoffman in the *Journal of Asian Studies* 4.2 (1979):170.

⁵¹ See the discussion at Shahidullah 1928:29-32.

⁴⁸ See n. 36 above. See also the author of O 3248, ?3265.

these two consorts on Mount Glory in the South, acting like hunters. Because he attained the rank of Vajradhara (*rdo rje chang*), he became known as Śābāripa (sic) the great accomplished one. The chasing of game and such deed are the conduct of a saint and the conduct of integration; for others, even of high comprehension, they are wrong.

This teacher was called Saraha the Younger.

Sum-pa-mkhan-po (1:90:25) follows this incorrect designation of Logi (or Loki) and Guni. The names seem to refer to the actor parents of Śabara, given by Sham Sher (Lévi 422) as Loka and Gaurī. (So also Padma-dkar-po at 146:4).

A song of Mahāmudrā entitled “Secret Lamp of Symbolic Tantrism” (*brda rgyud gsang ba'i sgron ma*) that the two ladies sing to Advayavajra (“Advayavajra, listen to this!”) is found in the Tibetan Sacred Canon. The colophon names the dākinīs Jñānalocanā (*ye shes kyi spyan*) and Padmalocanā.⁵² The wording of these instructions does not correspond to that of the biographies, nor does the wording of a text reporting answers by Saraha the Great Brahman to questions on Mahāmudrā posed by Maitrīpada.⁵³

In his account, Tāranātha emphasizes Maitrīpa’s deliverance from lack of faith in his unorthodox teachers. From Indian sources presumably, Tāranātha introduces some new elements (*Bka' babs* 15:7–16:5, tr. 11–12, Schieffner 24–25):

On the road to the South he met Prince Sakara. Together they went to Mount Glory. The people thereabouts said, “Śabari is an accomplished one of the past; it is useless to try to find him now.” They prayed one-pointedly, and met him in six months.

The matted hair on Śabari’s head was all unravelled and swarmed with lice, upon which two consorts feasted. With all this, Maitrīpa lacked somewhat in faith. The prince, however, made prostration to his feet; whereupon he (i.e., Śabari) pronounced, “*A ya ja ra va la hu*,” and he was liberated to reality, becoming a rainbow body. He (Maitrīpa) had faith at that.

Then again he lacked somewhat in faith when he saw the two good wives slaying pigs, deer and pe-

cocks. Then with a snap of the fingers, the whole scene disappeared.

By virtue of initiation, instruction, and subsequent advice, there eventually grew in him the intuitive vision (*gzigs pa'i ye shes, jñāna-darśana*) of the way things really are. He became the chief of boundless numbers of dākas and dākinīs.⁵⁴

During this period he accomplished the eight accomplishments, beginning with that of the sword.⁵⁵ Then he supposed he should become a wisdom-holder (*rig pa 'dzin pa, vidyādhara*) who lives for an eon.⁵⁶ But when he had gathered the materials and signs of accomplishment had appeared, Śabari made the fore-finger-pointing [gesture] and they were annihilated.⁵⁷ He declared:

“What do you expect to accomplish with that bit of illusion? Go and teach the philosophic meaning (*don, artha*) of the way things are, in detail.”

So he returned to the Middle Country.

The interruption of the long-life ceremony, and the prophecy that he will attain Mahāmudrā only after death, explain why Maitrīpa is not considered to remain alive, like Saraha and Śabari.⁵⁸ Tāranātha and Padma-dkar-po spell this out in describing his death further on.

6. THE TEACHING YEARS: CONTROVERSIES AND CONVERSATIONS

The Tibetan historians generally agree in describing his further career. Maitrīpa’s return to the academic world produces controversy or debate; he retires to a hermitage; and he makes a number of influential converts. They differ, however, in details, especially in regard to the debates. Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag, 'Gos lotsāva, and Padma-dkar-po name Ratnākaraśānti as an incidental opponent, but Tāranātha scorns that allegation as dramatization. This detail should not detain us.⁵⁹

Returning from retreat to the monastic universities of the Pāla Dynasty, Advayavajra pursues a career of

⁵² O 3135 = T 2287, *Zhwa-lu* 498:1–2.

⁵³ O 5048, Peking ed. only. Apparently a Tibetan composition. For other works in Tibetan translation attributed to Śabara see Tāranātha, *History* tr. 390; Robinson 1979:290 (and biography with picture 37–40); Hadano 1959:294–97. On Śabara as possible originator of the cult of Vajrayoginī see Bhattacharya 1968:cxivcxv. The biography of Śabara referred to by Tāranātha, *History* (128 & n32) is to that of the *Bka' babs* cited above.

⁵⁴ On these figures, see Beyer 1973:45–47.

⁵⁵ For the eight *siddhi* according to Nāgārjuna, see ibid. 246–47.

⁵⁶ For a long-life ceremony, see ibid. 375–98.

⁵⁷ Destruction is one among the eight *siddhi*; see ref. n55 above.

⁵⁸ But cf. references to Maitrīpa in *Marpa*: he gained the highest rank “within one life” (245:4); he comes in dream, etc. (tr. index s.v. Maitrīpa).

⁵⁹ The relevant passages are translated in the papers cited in nn. 6, 12 above. According to Padma-dkar-po, the debate

writing and teaching in accordance with Śabara's instructions. He has composed some works at Śrīparvata, according to the Sham Sher manuscript and Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag, but not the famous works on "non-attentiveness" (amanasikāra).

Maitrīgupta with his literary education, not the low-caste Śabara, was able to commit the insight to writing. His departure from academia was itself impelled by a crisis: he felt a need to break with philosophical conventions and approach the goal with tantric yoga. He now returns to that milieu with the added confidence and authority of spiritual accomplishment gained in retreat among the *sabara* tribals. Thus described, his career recapitulates the course of buddhist Tantrism. He now composes treatises that are controversial in nature. He also gathers disciples. Some are royalty and serve as patrons; others are Tibetan and carry off the teachings to preserve them for posterity.

The *Blue Annals* summarizes the period thus ('Gos 746:1-2, tr. 842):

He was blessed by Śabari and enlightened by his words, whereby he came to personally discover the essential meaning. Then he expressed it in the system of "without mindfulness and without attentiveness" and the like. The great scholar Śāntipa was displeased with that and made a debate, but Maitrīpa was victorious. Thereafter he was known as Maitrīpa the Victorious (*rgyal ba, jina*). He made many disciples . . .

In other versions, the debate with Ratnākaraśānti is secondary. Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag (371:10-13):

. . . And he [Śabari] told him, "Go to the Middle Country. Put yourself in my place and favor the professors; favor those who are fit vessels."

Thus he did, roaring the lion's roar, he converted the heterodox Natikara.⁶⁰ Śāntipa also put down his debate book and ran away. No one else being able to debate, he was made patron of the festival (*mchod dpon*) of Vajrāsana (*rdo rje gdan*). The king of Magadha, esteeming him above all, named him Great Sovereign (*mnga' bdag chen po, mahā-prabhu*) Maitrīpa. He composed twenty-four works on Amanasi (*sic*) doctrine while dwelling at the hermitage of Mount Blazing Fire (*me bar gyi dgon pa*). His disciples . . .

with Śāntipa concludes the dispute begun previously; see passage tr. sec. 3 above.

⁶⁰ For variants of this name see n. 10, paper ref. n. 6 above.

The most detail is provided by Padma-dkar-po (295:1-298:1):

Everyone those days [in the Middle Country] spoke of Maitrīpa's meeting with Śabari, and he grew famous. Some who lacked faith claimed that he had not met Śabari, but had been blessed by Māra (*bdud*). A heterodox teacher named Ma-trang-sen, professing heterodox logic, had a following of two thousand. He said:

"If this one has met Śabari, I will not prevail. If he has not, he will not prevail over me. Let us find out by debating."

King Samunja⁶¹ prepared a platform in the courtyard for debate. He appointed, as judges, Śāntipa and other buddhists as well as non-buddhists. He swept and sprinkled all the roads. He arranged for the defeated party to follow the victor, who would lead him seated upon a chariot.

Maitrīpa argued first, the other to argue after. He established the hypothesis of "not taking a stand" as the view, "nonattentiveness" as the meditation, and so forth; and he established the reasons⁶² and cited scripture to support them. With all that, the other did not prevail: great Maitrīpa was victorious and became known as the Victor. The other took ordination together with his followers.

Then Ratnākaraśānti posts a notice of his faults during a festival at Vajrāsana [= Bodh Gaya], but evades a debate when challenged. Maitrīpa is appointed patron of the festival (*dus mchod kyi bdag po*). There follows the report of his expulsion from Vikramāśila: Atīśa spies him with wine and a woman, and reports it to the king. Maitrīpa demonstrates his ability to transmute wine into milk and milk into wine, after which he departs in displeasure, sailing across the Ganges on the skin of a black antelope. Then (297:4):

He went to East India, where he founded a hermitage at the charnel ground of the mountain Blazing Like Fire (*ri bo me ltar 'bar ba*), and dwelt there. When the time came he said, "Vajrapāni, go and gather my disciples in the vicinity," and they were gathered. He displayed extensive offerings and a circle (*'khor lo, mandala*) of the hosts [of deities] and for each of his disciples he sought a blessing. He spoke his testament in the form of meditation instructions. His

⁶¹ Samunja = Sañmukha? This king is unidentified.

⁶² Read *rigs* for *rig*.

followers continued to entreat him to remain for many years, but they already possessed the initiations, and he said "No" lest the time for accomplishing *siddhi* (*dngos grub*) should pass unutilized. He passed away at the age of 75, received by Vajrayogini.

The time for attaining *siddhi*, as we have learned above, is after death.

Mount Blazing Fire (as Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag calls it) is a charnel ground; it can be located only from references in *Marpa*, who studies there under Maitrīpa (293:2, tr. 117):

I went to the bank of the River Ganges in the East,
To the hermitage of the mountain Blazing Like a Fire
(ri me ltar 'bar ba);
Seated in the shade of a cool *nyagrodha* tree,
I saw the reverend, the great sovereign [Maitrīpa].

Apparently, the place is five and a half days east of Phullahari, which is probably in western Magadha.⁶³ Tāranātha identifies the charnel ground as the Cool Grove (near Rājgir)⁶⁴ and another residence as "Kusala forest in the East."

The twenty-four works on Amanasikāra (mentioned by Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag) are identified by Bu-ston as Tōhoku numbers 2229–52; numbers 2253–54 are commentaries by disciples of Maitrīgupta.⁶⁵ Aside from these texts, we know of Maitrīpa's teachings from an account by 'Gos lotsāva as introduction to the chapter of the *Blue Annals* on Mahāmudrā, from the songs of Marpa recorded in his biography (index s.v. Maitrīpa), and so forth. The texts, and Tibetan accounts of the teachings, will be subjected to separate studies.

Although Tāranātha describes the Śāntipa incident as a sectarian invention of Tibetans, he does admit the controversial nature of Maitrīgupta's works. In addition, Tāranātha alone (among these sources) reports his marriage (16:7–17:5):

⁶³ On Phullahari see Naudou 1968:146, Roerich 1958:85. In *Marpa* read *Inga* for *snga*.

⁶⁴ On the Cool Grove (śītavana) see Roerich loc. cit., Edgerton 1953 s.v. Das at the index to Sum-pa-mkhan-po (1:133 s.v. bsil) follows Hsüan Tsang (Beal 1884:2:166) in specifying the environs of Nālandā. (Tāranātha, *History* 204:12–13 does not indicate Kashmir as its location [so tr. 287]; the meditator is Kashmiri.)

⁶⁵ Bu-ston, *Gsung bum* La 47a, cited from 'Gos lotsāva tr. 833.

The professor promulgated Nonattentiveness (*yid la mi byed pa, amanasikāra*) in the Middle Country. Some people did not believe in it; for them he expounded the detailed commentary to the textual source, the *Dohā*.⁶⁶ When they said, "This is not the thought of the tantras," he proved that it was with accepted scriptures, chiefly the *Hevajra* (dgyes rdor) and the *Guhyasamājā* ('dus pa).⁶⁷ To the question, "From whom did you receive these?" he composed the *Elucidation of Initiation*⁶⁸ which Tibetans consider to be the oral instructions of the mountain man (ri khrod pa, śabara), who taught them from his own experience.

At the Cool Grove (bsil ba'i tshal, śītavana) charnel ground he taught many methods for transference of consciousness.⁶⁹ The Great Black One (nag po chen po, mahākāla) accomplished whatever he wished for; he came through the sky from afar, carrying objects, animate or inanimate, for many hundreds of miles (*dpag tshad, yojana*). He came carrying the king of Malabar's daughter.⁷⁰ She later became known as the sky-goer (*mkha'gro, dākinī*) Gaṅgādhara.

For the most part he dwelt as chief in the Kusala Forest in the East. The sky-goer took the sacrificial offerings (*gtor ma, bali*) in the form of a jackal; she accomplished the gazes;⁷¹ and she mastered countless miracles such as the magical creation of various bodies, shapes, and forms.

Because of the two previous instances of lack of faith in Śabari, he did not remain alive. He passed away at about 70 years of age. Mahāmudrā (*phyag rgya chen po*), the highest accomplishment, came in the intermediate state.

Maitrīgupta's lady (*jo mo*) Gaṅgādhara became prominent in her own right as a teacher, according to the *Blue Annals*. The yogin Khyung-po visits her twice in India ('Gos 640:6, 641:1, tr. 731; repeated

⁶⁶ The *Dohākośa-pañjikā*, O 3101–2. See also Skt. ed. Bagchi 1938.

⁶⁷ See for example the *Refutation of Wrong Views* (kudṛṣṭinirghāta), Adv. 1 = O 3073.

⁶⁸ *Sekanirṇaya*, Adv. 5 = O 3097.

⁶⁹ Marpa sends his son to the Cool Grove in the form of a pigeon when he dies, to transfer his consciousness into a new body (*Life* tr. 175).

⁷⁰ On the kingdom of Malabar in this era see Schwartzberg 1978:37, DE 5.

⁷¹ The gazes (*lta stangs, drṣṭi*) are a sort of rite. See Snellgrove 1959:1:48, 84–86.

Sum-pa 371 par. 1, ed. LC 470:4). His official biography says ('Jam-dbyangs-mkhyen-brtse 104:3–4):

Although lama Maitrīpa was not living, he offered a great deal of gold to his lady, the wisdom-dākinī Gaṅgādhara, and received many instructions.

7. LEGACY

The histories record only one tradition on his Indian disciples: a list of twenty-one.⁷² Tāraṇātha adds descriptions of those still known to Indian tradition (17:6–18:2):

Maitrīpa's disciples. Tibetans of old, the ancients (*rnying ma rmams*), say that there were four greater, seven middling, and ten lesser. The middling and lesser cannot be positively identified as known in India. Generally, there were many learned and capable disciples who were yogins.

The four "greater" are known universally: Sahajavajra (lhan skyes rdo rje), Śūnyata-samādhi (stong nyid ting 'dzin), Rāmapāla, and Vajrapāṇi.

Sahajavara was called Nategana; he composed the commentary (O 3099) to the *Ten Verses on Reality* (de kho na nyid bcu pa, tattvadaśaka; *Adv.* 20 = O 3080) and the *Compendium of Stations* (gnas pa

⁷² See 'Gos 746:2–747:1, tr. 842–43; Padma 398:1–4 (following 'Gos), Sum-pa 118:29–119:1 (following Tāraṇātha).

bsdus pa, sthitisamuccaya; O 3071). Śūnyatāsamādhi was called Devākaracandra; he authored the text *Illumination of Knowing and Understanding* (shes rab ye shes gsal ba, prajñāñāna-prakāśa; O 3070). Vajrapāṇi was known as Indian Pāṇi (rgya gar phyag na); he composed the compendium *Vajra Word* (rdo rje tshig, vajrapada; O 3100). These three did not become wisdom-holders (*rig 'dzin, vidyādhara*) in their lifetimes.

For us, the lineage comes through Rāmapāla, "sustainer of joy" or "sustainer of the pleasing"; he is the commentator to the *Instruction on Initiation* (dbang nges bstan, seka-nirdeśa; O 3097).

In summarizing, Tāraṇātha compares Maitrīpa with Nāropa (17:5–6):

At the time of Elder Brother Nāropa's demise, this professor's acts of value for creatures had just begun. Compared with Nāropa, his reputation and his gathering of disciples were not large, yet his benefit to others, like lightning, was the greater. He had many disciples in India ('phags yul, āryadeśa) during his lifetime, but there were not to be many afterward. They spread more widely in the north—in Nepal, Tibet, and so forth.⁷³

⁷³ "And so forth" may be intended to include China. See Beckwith 1984:15, item no. 25, for texts transmitted to China by Tibetans.

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