This brief text, which has no known commentary, identifies itself (verse 3) as an account of philosophic systems (a siddhānta). In it, Maitrīgupta focuses upon several schools' understanding of "middle way". Probably, the text was composed as a topical outline for teaching. It is one of a number of his works expounding images or technical terms from Mahāyāna tradition. A Sanskrit version survives, 1 as well as one Tibetan translation. 2

The work was studied and translated into English by Sunitikumar Pathak, and published in the Adyar Library Bulletin in 1961. 3 There the Sanskrit is reprinted with emendations, and the Tibetan is transliterated from the Narthang edition of the Sacred Canon. To the study is prefixed an account of the author, Maitrīgupta. The use of Tibetan sources signals a knowledgeable and conscientious approach to the subject matter. However, insufficient materials were brought to bear for either study (that of the author, or that of the text) to avoid errors. This is an attempt to bring up to date our understanding of the text, but without correcting the work of Pathak on every point.

Maitrīgupta, also known as Maitrīpāda (to the Tibetans, Maitrīpa) and Advayavajra, is dated ca 1007-1085. 4 He is known, among other things, for his exposition of a variant of Mahāmudrā ("Great Symbol") philosophy known as amanasikāra. His usage of this term will be explored in context of the translation of another of his works. 5
The Tibetan redactor Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub, in his analytic list of works that expound the *Amanasikāra* system, describes the *Six Verses* as teaching the philosophic view that characterizes Tantrism. This is the source of the Narthang catalogue's identification of this work as "teaching the tantric view" (Pathak 539-40). The comment describes the text, however, not the author.

Maitrīgupta shows how each of the four Mahāyāna philosophic systems defines the term "middle way". The term is used interchangeably with "freedom from the four extremes" (asserting eternalism, nihilism, neither, and both), and "dependent origination". In context of the correct approach, Maitrīgupta makes the further identifications "clear light nature of a meditational deity" and "non-dual great bliss". The terms "empty" and "unarising" are also adduced as equivalents.

Three verses present the views of three systems; three verses follow with the preferred interpretation.

To explain and expand the verses would in effect recreate the Mahāyāna sections of Advayavajra's *Ratnāvalī*, his full exposition of *siddhānta*. But a translation of the *Ratnāvalī* is forthcoming. So let me limit myself to identifying the four systems, not all of which find room to be named in the "Six Verses".

1) Those who profess that cognition possesses forms (the *Sākāra-vāda*) describe the object of cognition as existing in a momentary mode. The *Sākāra-vāda* consists of the Sautrāntika school, which is regarded as Mahāyāna, plus the *Sākāra-vāda* branch of the *Yogācāra*.

2) Those who profess the absence of forms (the *Nirākāra-vāda* branch of the *Yogācāra*), describe reality as an expression of self-awareness.
3) Among the Madhyamaka, those who profess illusion-like
nonduality (the Māyopamādvaya-vāda) describe reality as
transparent, or clear light.

4) The Madhyamaka to which the author adheres, those who
profess the unsupportedness of all phenomena (the
Apratisthāna-vāda), is expounded in more detail in the second
triad of verses.

In the edition that follows, the Sanskrit has been corrected
by reference to the Tibetan, and to meter.

English Translation

1) To professors of Sākāra, "freedom from the four extremes"
means understanding that the object of cognition exists in a
momentary mode, empty of thought-constructions and lacking
objectification.

2) "Middle way" is defined [by professors of Nirākāra] in
terms of a self-awareness that is not nil; it appears as blue,
etc. objects, but characteristics do not arise in it.

3) To professors of Māyopamādvaya, "freedom from the four
extremes" is [to know that] the characteristics are false, and
[in reality] clear light.

The following system has evidence for its beliefs.

4) To know the emptiness of objects is to know emptiness
free of appearance and free of coverings. That is the Middle Way
from which the "subsequent" or conventional has been purged.

5) Whether it is clear light or not, in reality it is
unobjectifiable. Because things are by nature unarising in any
way, we define "middle way" without reference to them.

6) To possess the clear light nature of a meditational unity
is to be "free from the four extremes". To enjoy the nature of
non-dual great bliss is identical with dependent origination.
Sanskrit Edition

catuṣkoṭi vinirmuktām/ jñānavastu sādkaṃśikam//
kalpaśūnyām anālambhyām/ viduḥ sākāravadinaḥ//1//

svasaṃvitter anucchedāt/ nīlādīnām ābhāsanāt//
nimittānām anutpādāt/ madhyamā pratipat mataḥ//2//

catuṣkoṭi vinirmuktām/ prakāśālīkalakṣaṇaḥ//
māyopamādvayaścaiṣa/ siddānto pramāṇasāṅgaḥ//3//

vastuśūnyā tu yā vittī/ nirāvīla nirāṇjanā//
madhyamā paripat saiva/ tatprśthe śuddhasaṁvṛtiḥ//4//

prakāśo vāprakāśo vā/ tattvato nopalabhyate//
sarvathājātarūpatvāt/ madhyamām apare viduḥ//5//

catuṣkoṭi vinirmuktām/ prakāśo devatātmakah//
sukhādvayasvabhāvāsca/ pratītyotpādamātrakah//6//

Notes

1 Work no. 18 in Haraprasad Shastri, ed.,
Advayavajrasamgraha (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1937).

2 Tibetan translation by Vajrapāṇi and Nags-tsho
Tshul-khrims-rgyal-ba. Otani Catalogue no. 3074, Tohoku
Catalogue no. 2230.

3 Sunitikumar Pathak, "The Madhyamaśatka of Metri". Adyar

4 Mark Tatz, "The Life of the Siddha-Philosopher
Maitrīgupta". Journal of the American Oriental Society 107:4
(1987):698b. See also idem, "Maitrī-pa and Atiśa" in Proceedings
of the 4th International Seminar on Tibetan Studies (Munich 1985, in press); and idem, "MaitrIpa and Ratnakarasanti" in Burmiok Athing Commemorative Volume (Dharmsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, forthcoming).

5 Advayavajra, Amanasikāra-uddeśa, Tohoku no. 2249 = Shastri, ed., op. cit no. 21


MADHYAMAŚĀṬKA
DERGE TANJUR

ममं ज्ञातं सस्तुमस्य परमं भवति
सुपर्युज्य नमः शुभः

ममं ज्ञातं सस्तुमस्य परमं भवति
सुपर्युज्य नमः शुभः

ममं ज्ञातं सस्तुमस्य परमं भवति
सुपर्युज्य नमः शुभः

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सुपर्युज्य नमः शुभः