

FIVE-PART MAHAMUDRA
BY
PADMA KARPO



BY TONY DUFF

Five-Part Mahamudra by Padma Karpo

The Five-Part Mahamudra with Elegant Commentary by Drukchen
Padma Karpo



By Tony Duff
• Padma Karpo Translations •
Kindle Edition

Copyright © 2008 Tony Duff. All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photography, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system or technologies now known or later developed, without permission in writing from the publisher.

First edition 10th June, 2008

Produced and Published by
Padma Karpo Translation Committee
P.O. Box 4957
Kathmandu
NEPAL

Committee members for this book: translation and composition, Lama Tony Duff; design, Christopher Duff.

Web-site and e-mail contact through:
<http://www.pktc.org/pktc>
or search Padma Karpo Translation Committee on the web.

Contents

1. Preface
2. Introduction
3. The Source: Gampopa's Instruction to Phagmo Drupa That Began the Five-Part Mahāmudrā
4. The Teaching: *A Written Instruction Coming from the Throphu Kagyu on the Five-Part Mahāmudrā* by The Translator from Throphu, Jampay Pal
5. The Teaching: “*Mind Harvest*”, *An Instruction on the Five-Part Mahāmudrā* by All-knowing Padma Karpo
6. Glossary
7. About Padma Karpo Translation Committee, the Author, and Supports for Study
8. Notes

Preface

Dear Readers,

We are actively engaged in producing Kindle versions of all of our titles. We would like to contact you about new Kindle books and other similar productions, but Amazon does not allow a way for us to communicate with you as a purchaser of our Kindle books. Therefore we encourage you to register with us by [sending an email to us at PKTC \(pktcandtcc@pktc.org \)](mailto:pktcandtcc@pktc.org) to subscribe to our mailing list. You can also [visit our web-site](#) to see the full range of our publications.

Please note that there are two other Kindle Books on Five-Part Mahamudra that go with this book. They contain commentaries on Five-Part Mahamudra by the eighth Situ Rinpoche of the Karma Kagyu and Jigten Sumgon, founder of the Drigung Kagyu. It will be helpful to read them in conjunction with this book. Each one deals with the topic in an entirely different way. There is also a paper book available from PKTC and its distributors called “Gampopa’s Mahamudra” which not only contains all three of these texts but includes a major commentary on Jigten Sumgon’s text by the late Kagyu master Tenga Rinpoche of Bengchen Monastery; his commentary enhances the matter even further.

Please *do not* purchase our Kindle books, read them, then return them for a refund! The translations in the books take a long time to make and the books are not easy to produce. If you read and return for a refund to suit yourself, you create great difficulties for us which adversely affects our ability to come out with more books. We thank you for your consideration on this point.

Introduction

“Five-Part Mahāmudrā” is a specific way of practising Mahāmudrā that is used in the Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. It was first taught by Gampopa to his disciples and since then has become one of the main ways that Mahāmudrā is practised in the Kagyu lineage. This kindle book contains two texts on the subject by masters of the Kagyu lineage, as explained later in the introduction. The main text is by the fourth head of the Drukpa Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, Padma Karpo.

This book is extracted from a larger book with a complete presentation of the Five-Part Mahāmudrā, including translations of various other texts. The book is readily available on paper under the title “Gampopa’s Five Part Mahāmudrā, The Five-part Mahamudra Practice Taught to Phagmo Drupa By Gampopa”, authored by Tony Duff and published by PKTC June 1008, ISBN 978-9937-2-0607-5.

1. The Source of the Teaching

The Kagyu lineage traces itself back to the Indian siddha Tailopa⁽¹⁾. His instructions on the practice of the vajra vehicle, including the instructions on Mahāmudrā, went successively to Nāropa in India and then to Marpa, Milarepa, and Gampopa in Tibet all of whom are regarded as the early masters of the lineage.

Gampopa [1079–1153 A.D.] represents a pivotal point in the spread of the Kagyu system of teaching and practice. Before him, there had been very little in the way of organized institutions and very little of the teaching had been written down. Starting in his time, institutions developed and the teachings began to be recorded in writing. Gampopa and his gurus in many ways are like the solid trunk of a tree that has not branched out yet. Gampopa is the point on the trunk where myriads of branches appear and the whole turns into a great and luxurious tree.

Gampopa had three heart sons of the secret mantra teachings called “The Three Men from Kham”. One was “Grey-Hair” who later became known as the first Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa. He became the source of the Karma Kamtsang—also known as Karma Kagyu—lineage, which is one of the four lineages that developed directly from Gampopa called the Four Greater Lineages of the Kagyu. Another one was Khampa Dorgyal who was also known as Phagmo Drupa. He became the source of the Phagdru⁽²⁾ Kagyu lineage, another one of the Four Greater Lineages. Eight of his heart disciples became the sources of nearly all the other Kagyu lineages, called the Eight Lesser Lineages, of the Kagyu. The third one was Saltong Shogom whose incarnations led a recluse’s life for many generations and who was not widely known of in Tibet; he did not give rise to any lineage—his incarnations have become known in recent times as Traleg Rinpoche.

On at least one occasion that is recorded but most likely on many occasions, Gampopa gave instructions on how to practise Mahāmudrā to his heart disciple Phagmo Drupa in a five-part format. Phagmo Drupa used this five-part format as the framework for his successful practice of Mahāmudrā.

Phagmo Drupa [1110–1170] was already famous as a great teacher and highly accomplished yogin before he came to Gampopa. However, after gaining great attainment under Gampopa’s care, he became a very famous teacher, with many disciples. He is well-known for teaching to vast assemblies and in at least one of them, said to contain five thousand practitioners of the vajra vehicle, taught the complete instructions of Mahāmudrā in the five-part format that Gampopa had given him and which he had successfully used for his own practice. This teaching, which was heard, practised, and passed on by his disciples, became a specific method for doing Mahāmudrā practice and over time become known as “Five-Part Mahāmudrā” or simply, “The Five-Parts”.

The Five-Part instructions went to all of Phagdrupa’s main disciples and so became a central part of the Eight Lesser lineages of the Kagyu—Drigung, Taklung, Throphu, Drukpa, Martshang, Yelpa, Yazang, and Shugseb—that developed because of them. The teaching also went from them into the Four Greater Lineages—Karma, Barom, Tshalpa, and Phagdrupa. For example, it went from the founder of the Drigung Kagyu, Jigten Sumgon, into the Karma Kagyu where it was transmitted by the lineage holders of that lineage. In this way, this particular teaching called “The Five-Part Mahāmudrā”

became one of the main ways that the Mahāmudrā teaching was transmitted in Kagyu lineages after Gampopa.

2. The Mahamudra Teaching

2.1. The Reality Called Mahamudra

What is Mahamudra? It is the name for reality used by a particular group of tantric practitioners in ancient India. It sounds exotic but means means “reality”, no more and no less.

The word “Mahamudra” is often translated as Great Seal and that is not wrong, but it does not convey the immediate, overarching sense of reality which is conveyed by the original term in Indian language. The *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* has a clear explanation of the word:

Ultimate reality in the tantric teachings that first came to Tibet was called Mahā Ati. This was translated in Tibetan as “rdzogs pa chen po” and translates into English as Great Completion. In the tantric teachings that came to Tibet in the later spread of dharma, ultimate reality was called Mahamudra. This was translated into Tibetan as “phyag rgya chen po”—in Tibetan, “phyag rgya” is the official translation equivalent for the Sanskrit “mudrā” and “chen po” for the Sanskrit “mahā”—and this is commonly translated into English as “Great Seal”.

The translation “Great Seal” is correct. However, the term really has the sense in Indian language of “The Great Stamp” or even better, “The Great Imprint”. In Tibetan, a “phyag rgya” refers to the kind of seal or stamp that is impressed upon something, like a wax seal used to seal a letter or a postage stamp that will be placed on a letter. These seals are more than just a seal, they are an *imprint* that both exists upon something and conveys some meaning⁽⁷⁾. Phenomena, just by being phenomena, are automatically subject to reality. They are imprinted with that reality. And it is not just one phenomenon or some phenomena that are connected with and hence imprinted with fundamental reality, rather, every phenomenon that there is necessarily is connected with and hence imprinted with that fundamental reality. Therefore the imprint, stamp, or seal of ultimate reality that phenomena bear is not just any imprint but is the one, “great” imprint that stamps itself on everything. So, when the term Mahamudra is used, it actually conveys the meaning “the great imprint, the one that all phenomena bear”. It is the imprint of ultimate reality that everything is stamped with, choicelessly.

The tradition explains the term further. The commentators of the tradition break the term “phyag rgya” down into “phyag” and “rgya” which they connect with “mu” and “drā” respectively of the original Sanskrit “mudrā”. Then the two are explained to mean wisdom and emptiness—and sometimes appearance and emptiness—respectively. The “chen po” is still correlated with “mahā” but is now explained as meaning that the two, wisdom and emptiness or appearance and emptiness are, and have always been, inseparable. However, this detailed explanation has to be kept within the basic meaning of the term, which is, if we say it really in English, “The Great Seal of Reality, which is that all phenomena inevitably are stamped by the fact of wisdom and emptiness inseparable”.

Why is reality equated with wisdom and emptiness inseparable and why is that equated with appearance and emptiness inseparable? At root, the things of the average person's world seem to be solid, permanent, and partless. That is the way that mind⁽⁸⁾ takes them to be. When one looks into this apparent solidity, and so forth, the things that appeared to be that way suddenly disappear. They were just fictions being invented by mind that was working in a mistaken kind of way. Reality does not have these fictions in it, for reality is what is, not a mistaken take on it. The absence of these things in reality is called "emptiness". However, there is still something about our existence that presents itself to us. When all the mistaken perceptions are removed, there is still a mind that knows. This kind of mind does not know in the way that the mistaken mind does; it operates in a fundamentally different way. The Buddha simply called this kind of mind "jñāna" which means "knowing" no more and no less. This is mostly translated as "wisdom" and that is the term used for it in this book. In other words, in reality, any phenomenon that could appear is always empty, absent of the mistaken form, at root. These phenomena do not exist in a vacuum, they are actually the things known by the un-mistaken type of mind, wisdom. So all phenomena are actually the appearances that arise in the wisdom that knows them and, as they arise in that wisdom, always lack the mistaken solidity, and so forth, that mistaken mind sees them to have. It is not that the phenomena arise and are then known by the wisdom, rather, they arise as part of the energy of wisdom itself. Thus all phenomena are, you can say, wisdom and emptiness inseparable or appearance and emptiness inseparable; when understood that way, the meaning is the same.

The yogic tradition of ancient India that understood reality in this way called it Mahamudra, the great stamp of reality with which all phenomena are always stamped, and their teaching was that that reality is wisdom and emptiness in inseparable unity.

2.2. The Practice of Mahamudra

It should be clear from the foregoing that the term Mahāmudrā is a term for reality. Beings need a practice to get back to that reality and the tantric systems that came from India to Tibet contained a number of different practices for that purpose. The tantric teachings that came into the Kagyu tradition included several: the teaching of Mahāmudrā itself, the teachings of deity practices of various sorts, and the yogic teachings summed up by Nāropa into what were called "The Six Teachings of Nāropa"—Fierce Heat, Illusory Body, Dreaming, Luminosity, Transference, and Intermediate State. The Mahāmudrā teaching is directly related to the practice called "Luminosity" contained in the six teachings of Nāropa. The practice of Mahāmudrā is also contained in a teaching called "Sahajayoga" or "Co-emergence Yoga". This latter name is mostly seen in English these days as "Co-emergent Union" but there is a point here: Mahāmudrā is a term for reality whereas Luminosity and Co-emergence Yoga are names of the practice of that reality. Phagmo Drupa once asked Gampopa about the two:

What difference is there, if any, between Mahāmudrā and Co-emergence Yoga?

Gampopa's reply made it very clear⁽⁶⁾:

In other words, Mahāmudrā is a timeless reality that is always present, whereas Co-emergence Yoga is a practice that is done at various times and time after time, of

uniting non-reality with reality, where reality is expressed above as the four different aspects of a buddha's enlightenment.

How did Gampopa see the teaching and practice of Mahāmudrā in relation to the other teachings and practices of reality that were handed down to him? His guru, Milarepa, had put strong emphasis on Fierce Heat, so that became a particularly important teaching in the Kagyu from Milarepa's time onwards. The writings in the collected works of Gampopa show that he did teach all of the six teachings of Nāropa but preferred to guide his students with the practice of Fierce Heat mixed with Mahāmudrā where possible and, where not possible, did teach the path of Mahāmudrā alone as his main way of leading disciples. This is very clear from another interchange between Phagmo Drupa and Gampopa⁽⁷⁾. Phagmo Drupa asked,

In terms of practising to gain experience, which is the most profound oral instruction?⁽⁸⁾

Gampopa replied by listing what he had heard other people say to be the most profound instruction for practice. He started with the Kadampa's mind training and went through several others, mentioned deity practice, then arrived at what his guru Milarepa had said. Having mentioned them all, he then answered the question;

... I heard Guru Mila say, "The prana practice of Fierce Heat is the profound meditation".

Adding it all up, for any given person, the dharma in which a person develops certainty is the profound one. So, for me, if you devote yourself to the guru and meditate on pairing Fierce Heat with Mahāmudrā and so train your mind in the enlightenment mind⁽⁹⁾, since both your own and others' aims will happen at the same time because of it, this is the profound one.

Phagmo Drupa queried,

Well then, do you prefer to lead people through Fierce Heat to start with or through Mahāmudrā?

The reply came,

It depends on the person's type. Younger people with good physical elements and channels who are instructed in and meditate on Fierce Heat itself will quickly develop the signs of warmth. Then, if they are given Mahāmudrā, experience and realization will quickly dawn. For older people who are in the category of not being able to tune the winds, I prefer to give Mahāmudrā or Co-emergence Yoga, though there is the possibility that, if Mahāmudrā is not produced within the mindstream, they might fall into bad activities and develop a very jaded and problematic character.

These interchanges are from an early, possibly initial, meeting between Gampopa and Phagmo Drupa. Phagmo Drupa asked a lot of questions of Gampopa, obviously to get a sense of Gampopa's style and knowledge. Later, after the required phase of testing the prospective guru, Phagmo Drupa decided to become a disciple of Gampopa.

At one point Phagmo Drupa returned to Gampopa, who was staying in his hermitage in Gampo Valley at the time, and, with some other yogins, asked him for an introduction to the nature of mind⁽¹⁰⁾. This time he was asking for the actual instructions needed for the practice. Gampopa gave a very pithy answer that the reality of mind is none other than the isness of a buddha's mind and went on to say that, if you want to get to that state of being, then you need to go to an isolated place and practice. He then mentioned the things to do in an actual session of practice which came as a sequence of things to do prior to the actual practice of Mahāmudrā and followed that with an extensive explanation of Mahāmudrā practice itself, the Co-emergent Yoga, as passed down through Tailo, Nāro, and so on. In this, he instructed Phagmo Drupa and the others to go to an isolated place suitable for the practice and then explained how to do the sessions of the practice of Mahāmudrā in a number of parts. This interchange is the actual source of the whole Five-Part Mahāmudrā teaching that has become a mainstay of Kagyu practice. Thus it is presented as the opening section of the book on [this page](#).

2.3. The Specific Practice of Mahamudra Done in Five Parts

Luminosity of the Six Teachings of Nāropa and Co-emergence Yoga are distinct teachings of Mahāmudrā that were part of the transmission of the tantric teachings that came from India to Tibet. Five-Part Mahāmudrā was not another teaching that was transmitted with them. Rather, Five-Part Mahāmudrā is Gampopa's instruction on how to do an effective session of Mahāmudrā practice. Gampopa gave an explanation of Mahāmudrā following the co-emergence system that came down through Śhāntipa to Tailopa and thence down to Gampopa as explained before but it could have been any other instruction on Mahāmudrā. He then instructed his disciples to do the practice of Mahāmudrā in sessions with five different parts to them, so that they could conduct a complete and effective session of Mahāmudrā practice.

Although these instructions originated with Gampopa, Phagmo Drupa was the heart disciple who heard and practised the five-part instruction and gained realization through it. Historically, Phagmo Drupa was the one who taught this style of practice to others and who became well known in the Kagyu as the source of this teaching.

Phagmo Drupa summed up the five parts and taught them to one large congregation in these words:

First, meditate on enlightenment mind;
Meditate on the yidam deity;
Meditate on the holy guru;
Meditate on Mahāmudrā;
Afterwards, seal it with dedication.

Thus, a session of Five-Part Mahāmudrā begins with the development of enlightenment mind. This, which necessarily includes taking refuge, means that the essential points of the practice of the Lesser and Great Vehicles are included in a session. It is followed by meditation on oneself as the personal deity, which means that the development stage practice of secret mantra is fully included in the session. That is followed by guru-yoga, unification with the guru's enlightened being, which means that a session includes one the greatest key points of secret mantra, devotion to the guru. It arouses

and intensifies devotion, which is one of the main forces behind actually being able to join with the guru's being and experience the reality of Mahāmudrā because of it. It gives the greatest possibility that the next part, which is the practice of Mahāmudrā itself, will be effective. The fourth part is the main practice, Mahāmudrā. Mahāmudrā corresponds to the completion stage of practice of secret mantra so, by practising Mahāmudrā, both development and completion stages of secret mantra are included in the session. Once that has been done, the session needs to be sealed and closed properly, which is done according to the Buddha's general instructions for all types of meditation, with dedication. In that way, the actual practice of Mahāmudrā, which is one of the core teachings of the Kagyu, is couched within a framework of other practices that create the best environment for doing the practice, which is the point of Five-Part Mahāmudrā.

3. The Texts Presented Here

The book starts out with the exchange between Gampopa and Phagdrup that resulted in the teaching called Five-Part Mahāmudrā. It comes from a text called *The Questions of Phagmo Drupa*, which is one of the texts preserved within Gampopa's Collected Works. The entire text is available in a publication called *Gampopa Teaches Essence Mahamudra* published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee in 2012. That is followed by a very early text on Five-Part Mahamudra written by one of Phagmo Drupa's disciples, the translator from Throphu. And that is followed by the main text in this book, a much later text on Five-Part Mahamudra written by Padma Karpo, the fourth Drukchen, that is, the fourth head of the Drukpa Kagyu.

3.1. An Early Text From the Throphu Kagyu

The Translator from Throphu, Nub Jampay Pal [1173–1225] was a direct disciple of Phagmo Drupa whose teachings became the source of the Throphu Kagyu tradition which is one of the Eight Lesser Lineages of the Kagyu.

After Nub Jampay Pal left Phagmo Drupa, he went and settled in Throphu, a place in Tsang, and established a monastery there. His talks were written down and one of them, called *One Hundred Foremost instructions*⁽¹¹⁾, contained the teaching on the Five-Part Mahāmudrā that he had heard directly from Phagmo Drupa.

The Throphu Kagyu was a very small lineage and its teachings mostly ended up in other Kagyu lineages. As time went by, these teachings were either lost or in danger of being lost. In the mid-nineteenth century, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye went around Tibet collecting teachings that were in danger of being lost and published them in a major collection called *The Treasury of Oral Instructions*. The Throphu Five-Part Mahāmudrā teaching mentioned above was included under the name “A Written Instruction Coming from the Throphu Kagyu on the Five-Part Mahāmudrā”. The original text was probably just entitled “Five-Part Mahāmudrā” but the name would have been changed to indicate where the text came from, a standard procedure in Tibetan literature.

The original teaching of Nub Jampay Pal was given and recorded nearly one thousand years ago, in the 1100's, right at the beginning of the Kagyu lineage. The text is short, with a very clear statement of the five parts. Importantly, it has the pithy, direct, no-frills presentation of Phagmo Drupa's original teaching which shows the style of the early Kagyu—the energy and flavour of a Kagyu yogin, doing nothing but a Kagyu yogin's practice comes through very clearly.

The text here gives a sense of the pithiness of the instructions that were passed on by Phagmo Drupa to his disciples and the early, very down-to-earth Kagyu style. One message that comes through very clearly is that these are instructions for practice, which is very much a hallmark of the Kagyu lineage. As the centuries went by in Tibet, earlier instructions that were often very simple in content became embellished with the frills of words and explanations. The instructions in this text do not have that kind of elaboration. Instead, they just show the basic message of what is to be practised.

3.2. A Text from the Drukpa Kagyu

The main text in this book was written many centuries after the text mentioned just above by the fourth head of the Drukpa Kagyu tradition, Padma Karpo.

Padma Karpo who was a member of the lineage of Phagmo Drupa's teachings as follows. Another direct disciple of Phagmo Drupa was Tsangpa Gyare, a yogin who was remarkable both for his high level of realization and the extraordinary number of students that he was said to have—some put it as high as fifty thousand, which is really an enormous number. One of his heart disciples was the repa⁽¹²⁾ called Lingje Repa. The teaching lineage that came down through him became known as the Drukpa Kagyu which was known for its emphasis on practice, even amongst the Kagyus, who were already known for the same. The heads of the Drukpa Kagyu in the centuries after Lingje Repa were a series of incarnations of Tsangpa Gyare called the Drukchens.

The Drukchens are universally considered to be very accomplished siddhas. More than that, they are famous for having extraordinary knowledge of dharma and incisive abilities when using that knowledge for the sake of disciples. The greatest scholar amongst them to date has been the fourth Drukchen, Padma Karpo [1527–1592]. He was exceptionally learned, so much so that he was given the title “all-knowing”, a title that was bestowed approximately once a century in Tibet when someone of amazing breadth of knowledge appeared. As might be expected of someone with this kind of quality, he was a prolific author with his collected works totalling over twenty volumes.

He wrote a text on Five-Part Mahāmudrā which is included in this book as the main text on the subject. If you compare this with the preceding text, you will see that he arranges the teaching into topics and sub-topics, and adds the teachings on the ordinary and extraordinary preliminaries. In comparison, the original teaching was very pithy and did not contain these things.

His text is interesting in two other ways. Firstly, it shows the particular style of the Drukpa Kagyu, who have their own preferences and ways when expounding Mahāmudrā; there has been little Drukpa Kagyu literature translated till now, so this should be of great interest. Secondly, Padma Karpo is one of the really great authors of Tibet, known to followers of all Tibetan lineages, and has a unique style of writing. He is well known for his erudite compositions which are marked by an extraordinary level of detail woven into a very short space, usually with layer upon layer of meaning in the words. This makes his works difficult to translate without losing meaning and also requires that the reader pay close attention so as to get the fullness of what he is saying. The other texts included here are straightforward to read, if you know the material, but Padma Karpo demands that you stop and think about each sentence and how it joins to the picture that he has been building up.

Tony Duff,
Swayambunath,
Nepal,
18th May 2008

—...—

The Source:

Gampopa's Instruction to Phagmo Drupa That Began the Five-part Mahamudra Teaching

—...—



Gampopa



Phagmo Drupa

Excerpt from “The Questions of Phagmo Drupa And Replies of Gampopa”

Phagmo Drupa offered,

Homage to you, precious guru. Guru Jewel, I have fully investigated both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and request you to give me an introduction to dharmatā⁽¹²⁾.

The guru said,

We say, “The two, buddhas and sentient beings”, so what does that mean? In mind, there are both rigpa and not rigpa⁽¹³⁾; these are present as recognizing rigpa and not recognizing it. If rigpa is recognized, it is called “buddha” so rigpa is to be introduced as the dharmatā⁽¹⁴⁾.”

You go to mountainous areas and so on, congenial places where disenchantment can be produced and experience can develop. There you arouse the mind⁽¹⁵⁾ thinking, “For the purposes of sentient beings, I will attain buddhahood”. You meditate on your body as the deity⁽¹⁶⁾. You meditate on the guru over your crown⁽¹⁷⁾. Then, not letting your mind be spoiled with thoughts, not altering this mind—because it is nothing whatsoever—in any way at all, set yourself in clarity which is pure, vividly present, clean-clear, wide-awake! ...⁽¹⁸⁾

—...—

**The Teaching:
The Instructions of Phagmo Drupa as Transmitted by
The Translator of Throphu, Jampay Pal**

—...—

A Written Instruction Coming from the Throphu Kagyu on the Five-Part Mahamudra

I prostrate to the holy gurus⁽¹⁹⁾.

The introduction to the Mahāmudrā, the core of the enlightened mind of the great guru Nāropa, in five parts is as follows:

1. Arousing the mind for supreme enlightenment.
2. Meditating on guru-yoga.
3. Meditating on the pride of the yidam deity.
4. Introducing⁽²⁰⁾ mindness⁽²¹⁾ as buddha.
5. Dedicating the roots of merit to complete enlightenment.

1) With very strong loving kindness and compassion, you should meditate while repeating from your heart three times the arousing of both aspiring and entering enlightenment mind⁽²²⁾.

2) During the daytime at the crown of your head and during the night-time in your heart, visualise on a three-fold seat of lion throne, lotus, and moon one atop the other your root guru with his hands in equipoise mudrā and arouse the recognition that he is buddha. Supplicate him intensely.

3) Arouse the pride of your body with its maṇḍala of channels being the yidam deity. You should do one hundred and eight or so recitations⁽²³⁾.

4) i) Introducing the un-fabricated as the innate. Set the body in the postures of meditation and then your mind, put together with that, should be left unfabricated⁽²⁴⁾. Rest at ease, rest in stillness, rest in open evenness. Remove the obstacles of the four points of straying and the three deviations. Sinking, agitation, and mental doings put like that into dawning of appearances is the removal, via the condition of visual forms and sounds, of obstructions to wisdom waking itself up⁽²⁵⁾.

ii) Introducing discursive thought as luminosity. Within that state⁽²⁶⁾, some thought will arise⁽²⁷⁾. Whatever arises, you look at it directly and by doing so see that is nothing to be looked at, and in just that, it becomes self-liberated. Thereby, the thought itself put into dawning of appearances by the conditions of various objects is the activity, via the condition of visual forms and sounds, of wisdom waking itself up. The discovery by looking directly that there is nothing to be looked at is the functioning of the activity of wisdom itself looking at itself to know its own face.

5) The three preliminary parts are the accumulation of merit. The fourth, main part is the accumulation of wisdom. Thus there are the two accumulations giving rise to the two fruitions of wakefulness and expansion, buddhahood⁽²⁸⁾. Thus dedication is to be done⁽²⁸⁾ according to that, the way in which they

arise⁽²⁹⁾, saying this three times,

By these roots of merit of mine,

May buddhahood be accomplished for the sake of migrators⁽³⁰⁾.

That completes the verbal instructions of the Precious One, the Jetsun from Dvagpo.

The above comes from the One Hundred Foremost instructions, drawn from the Collection of Written Talks given by the Lotsawa from Throphu, Nub Jampa'i Pal.

—...—

**The Teaching:
The Instructions of Phagmo Drupa as Transmitted by
All-Knowing Padma Karpo**

—...—



All-Knowing Padma Karpo
The Fourth Drukchen

“Mind Harvest”, An Instruction on Five-Part Mahamudra

Namo Mahāmudrāya

I pay homage to the fathers and sons of Glorious Phagmo Drupa and the Siddha Ling⁽²⁶⁸⁾.

I bow to all who lead migrators from the places of becoming,
Broadcasters of the message of holy dharma that so nicely shows
Emptiness which is freedom from the four extremes—not existence, non-existence, both, nor neither

—
That has a core of compassion.

This, which presents nothing that has not been said previously
Was discovered through awakening by force of previous training’s blessings,
And given as the fruition of vast merit constructed previously.



The eighty-four thousand-fold dharma heap⁽²⁶⁹⁾ written up clearly in just a few words for the minds of those to be tamed, the oral instructions that lead those who have not yet connected with the certainty of penetration⁽²⁷⁰⁾ that comes from the vajra word empowerment⁽²⁷¹⁾ to the level of a buddha in one life, the special feature of the precious sugata element⁽²⁷²⁾, the instructions of the Five-Part Mahamudra, will be explained here in three parts.

I. The Explanation of the Goodness of the Beginning

A. Ordinary Procedures

1. *Freedom and connection difficult to gain*

The cause is discipline, so the result, this human body, is difficult to gain. Why is that? Because the discipline is guarded to a greater or lesser extent. The essence is the eight freedoms and ten connections. Because one is apart from the eight unfree states, they are freedoms. Personal and other connections five each make ten. The human body means the human support. Precious means rare, more valuable, more powerful, and so on in terms of synchronising with dharma.

2. *Impermanence*

Examine your body by looking at each part from the top of the head down to the soles of the feet; which part of it is permanent? Look at the externals of place, house, wealth and property; what do you see that is not transitory, which is truly existing there? Each passing moment brings you closer to death. There is no certainty of the time of death; as the Son of the Conquerors, Palzangpo⁽²⁷³⁾, said:

There is no assurance that you will not die even today,
Yet you live life as though you are here for a permanent stay;
Beating your breast with your fist at the point of death is not far away!

Lord Milarepa said:

Years and months rain down.
The droplets of fats and food strike.
This illusory house of a body is on the verge of collapse.
How ready we are for the dotted picture of death—
Ready but we have just left it too late ...⁽²⁷⁴⁾

3. *Karma and Its Results*

Having cultivated such thoughts of death again and again one turns to thinking about karma and its results. Performing the ten virtues is the cause temporally of the higher strata⁽²⁷⁵⁾ and ultimately of buddhahood, whereas the ten non-virtues and what goes along with them produce the three bad migrations and only, even in the higher estates, unsatisfactoriness.

4. *The Disadvantages of Cyclic Existence*

No matter where you live it is unsatisfactory; no matter with whom you associate it is unsatisfactory; no matter what activity you do it is unsatisfactory; and, moreover, it is only ever the cause of such⁽²⁷⁶⁾, therefore, there is not one happy circumstance in it anywhere. The Invincible Guardian⁽²⁷⁷⁾ said it in these words,

Cyclic existence never has even
A needle-point's worth of happiness in it.
Definite happiness is nirvana alone.

B. Extraordinary Procedures

This has the three parts of: arousing the enlightenment mind; meditation of the special deity; and guru-yoga. These three being Mahamudra, they are determined to be of definitive meaning. That being so, you might say, "Then it does not make sense that they should be explained as preliminaries!"

However, there is no fault. These stages of the yoga to be meditated on are explained beforehand because, being associated with concept tokens, they are connected with provisional meaning; if they are determined as definitive-meaning Mahamudra, they are not some meaning other than the main part to be explained. In regard to that, a person who has the preliminaries of the three refuges arouses the mind of enlightenment then works at each of all of the things to be trained in. This way of doing the meditation is what the forefather gurus accepted.

1. Arousing the enlightenment mind

You cultivate loving kindness with the thought, "If all sentient beings were to have happiness and the cause of happiness, what would be wrong with that?" In doing so, if you cannot at first produce a very vast thought, then meditate on your mother in front of you and think how it would be "If she were to obtain the happiness of nirvana ..." and "If she had the cause of happiness, that is, if she had produced the roots of merit ..." When you have trained well in that, compassion is to be cultivated: for unsatisfactoriness think, "If those inside existence were emancipated from cyclic existence ..."; and for the causes of unsatisfactoriness think, "If they were freed from all non-virtues ..." Both of those are done first for one's mother and then for those who are close to you, whom you hold dear, and then for all sentient beings.⁽²⁷⁸⁾

Compassion is explained as being of three types: in regard to sentient beings, in regard to dharma, and non-referential⁽²⁷⁹⁾. A three-step summary is explained as follows. *Entering the Middle Way* says:

Initially, beings become attached to "I", the self, and
Produce attachment to "this" thing "of mine";
After which, like a water-wheel pushed around, are migrators
Without control; homage to what is compassion for them!
The pushed-around migrators are like the moon in water;
They move yet are seen to be empty of a nature ...

For the first of the three, think, "Due to permanence, singularity, and independence, these sentient beings have the unsatisfactoriness of permanence, singularity, and independence⁽²⁸⁰⁾; if they were freed of karmic cause and effect ..."

For the second one, think, “These sentient beings having a nature of being pushed around by karma; if they were freed from the cause and effect of unsatisfactoriness which is a reflection of being pushed around by karma, what would be wrong with that?”

For the third one, meditate on the thought, “If illusion-like sentient beings were freed from the cause and effect of illusion-like unsatisfactoriness ...” The emptiness mentioned in “they move yet are ... empty of a nature” is not different from their being “illusion-like”. In the *Vajra Heart Commentary* and others, the third step, explained as the character emptiness and the complexion compassion,⁽²⁸¹⁾ appears by implication under practices to be taken up.

Then there is meditation on enlightenment mind through exchange of oneself for other. Think in this way: “All of my happiness is given to others. All of others’ unsatisfactoriness ripens upon me (whereby you think that it is purified in its own place).” And also, “Whatever pain arises for the body is the liberation of every unsatisfactoriness of others by its ripening on me and may sentient beings have happiness.”

2. Meditation on the special deity

Perform the self-visualization of yourself as your own special deity whichever it is.

Doing it so that it is fully, completely visualized is the complete luminosity. The firm attitude that the enlightened body, speech, and mind of the deity are unalterably your own body, speech, and mind is firm pride. Knowing that the shape, and so on of the body of that deity is just the play of wisdom of complete purity is the recollection of complete purity.

If, after the yoga of that kind of illusory body has been cultivated for a long time, the mind becomes a little weak, turn your effort to the recitation of the mantra as explained for the deity. When finished with that, the containers dissolve into the content, that into the seat, that into oneself, that into the seed-syllable mantra garland, that into the seed-syllable, and from that you enter non-referencing luminosity⁽²⁸²⁾ and remain equipoised on that. Then, in post-attainment, visualisation as the illusion-like deity is done like this: whatever appears is taken into awareness as the body; whatever is heard is taken into awareness as the speech; whatever is thought of is taken into awareness as the play of dharmatā. That sort of thing has, moreover, been spoken of like this:

If mental elaboration is made dream-like,
Mental elaboration itself makes absence of elaboration.

3. Guru yoga

Above the crown of yourself visualised as the deity, on top of a perfect throne-seat, the root guru is clearly present as Vajradhara and atop his head the gurus of the lineage are lined up vertically in order. You develop that meditation then produce the attitude that in essence they are the same in dharmatā and in appearance they are a wish-fulfilling jewel that fulfills every single need and wish for those to be tamed. With that attitude, you worship with offerings of the finest things of all the animate and inanimate, and also with secret and suchness offerings. With,

The stage of ripened fruition of the three kāyas,
In the Dharma Palace of the place of Akaniṣṭha⁽²⁸³⁾ ...

and so on, supplicate the line of lineage gurus from your heart, from the depths of your bones. If you want something more abbreviated, meditate on and offer to the guru himself and say this however many times:

All mother sentient beings equivalent to space take refuge in the guru, the Buddha's
dharmakāya;

Take refuge in the guru, the saṃbhogakāya;

Take refuge in the guru, the compassionate nirmāṇakāya;

Take refuge in the guru, the precious buddha ...

If depression and disenchantment arise and you become withdrawn and the like, if you are no longer glad at heart and your mind, turning away from the practice, no longer wants to stay on your seat, then visualize your guru smiling cheerily in the centre of your heart and smile, yourself, too. Whatever you see, whatever appears to you, see as the guru smiling and supplicate him or sing a nice tune, say nice words, relax your mind, be happy and open, and clear your unhappy state. If you have a lot of wild, discursive thoughts then, from within that kind of state of mixing your mind with the guru's mind, rest in an uncontrived way and supplicate and return to being un-distracted.

II. The Explanation of the Goodness of the Middle

A. The Points of Body

The legs are crossed in vajra posture; the hands placed in the mudrā of equipoise; the spine is kept straight like a column of coins; the shoulders are stretched out like the wings of a vulture; for the throat, the chin should be pressed in a little towards the larynx; and the eyes are directed at the tip of the nose. They are needed because they cause the winds⁽²⁸⁴⁾—Downward-Clearing, Fire-Accompanying, Pervader, Upward-Moving, and Life-Holder respectively—to be definitely inserted into the central channel and then the intent of the precious tantra sections is that, from that happening, wisdom is produced.

B. The Points of Speech

The dead winds are expelled three times, then the in-breath is taken, pushed down below, and held for one possible period. When it cannot be held⁽²⁸⁵⁾, it is let out, and you rest mind in its own character⁽²⁸⁶⁾. Then, speech is silenced.

C. The Points of Mind

1. *The method of resting the mind*

Saraha said:

Involvement with emptiness separated from compassion
Does not gain the supreme path
And meditation on compassion alone also
Will not obtain a place of emancipation in this samsara.
The capability of whatever has the two connected together
Brings no dwelling in samsara, no dwelling in nirvana.

This means that meditation is done with prajñā-emptiness and upāya-great compassion unified. The innate character, emptiness, and its complexion, its shining forth as compassion, is such that when the shining forth takes effect there is emptiness and, equally, when the emptiness takes effect there is shining forth as compassion, so that the two are unalterably inseparable.

At this point, beginners should not think about the past, not think about the future, and not analyze the present; they should completely abandon every thought of the type “This is to be meditated on, that is not to be meditated on” and then rest self-settled, remaining undistractedly in that uncontrived state.

Thus, the great siddha Lord Ling⁽²⁸⁷⁾ said:

If you rest in the freshness of no contrivance, realisation dawns;
If you preserve that like the flow of a river, totality will also dawn.

Totally abandon all the concept tokens of referencing,
Then rest perpetually in equipoise on that, Oh yogin!

In other words, having placed yourself in the way mentioned, if thoughts proliferate and you are not able to stay there, cut them down relentlessly and that will cause them to stop. If you preserve⁽²⁸⁸⁾ it like that, it will develop greatly. That is knowing the door of appearance of realisation through holding the mind.

The glorious Archer⁽²⁸⁹⁾ said:

If bound, it goes off in the ten directions ...

Therefore, the way to place yourself is to let discursive thought do whatever it wants and then to be assiduous at the mindfulness of mere non-distraction; by doing it that way, an abiding without proliferation of concepts will arise. As Saraha said:

If let go, it abides steadily without wandering;
I have realised that it is contrary, like a camel.

The intent here concerning the point being discussed in this section, of resting in equilibrium, is that it is the development of the ability to stay on top of whatever appears while not manufacturing anything, which is then used as the place upon which the actual meditation is done. In other words, as was said:

This mindness which is bound in knots will be
Liberated if loosened, there is no doubt.

And, *Hevajra* says:

Whatever unbearable karmas of beings
Cause them to be fettered,
If it has method with it, then that itself
Will liberate from the fetters of becoming.⁽²⁹⁰⁾

Furthermore, it also says:

Concepts themselves purify concepts and ...

At the time of doing this meditation, if there is sinking, raise the gaze to clear up the awareness. If there is agitation, relax. If there is dullness, make it stronger by intensifying the strength of knowing. Thus the problems will definitely be dispelled. If the afflicted concepts do not shine forth as purity⁽²⁹¹⁾, meditate assiduously at the unification of emptiness and compassion explained above.

2. The method of honing in on the mind

i. Honing in on the essence of mind

Look while asking: what kind of thing is the essence of the mind which is resting like that? If you

ascertain that it is luminosity-emptiness, look at the essence of what moves out from it⁽²⁹²⁾. And, look to see whether it is a two-fold situation when something comes out from mind or not. If it is two-fold, examine how it is as two. If it is not two, examine how it moves, how it stays. This so-called “luminosity-emptiness” is a subject of self-knowing luminosity and an object known as empty, the two of which are not different. Then, if you examine the essence of mind to see whether it is born or stops, is permanent or annihilated, comes or goes, is different or one, you will see that it is beyond being an object of elaboration. If you realise in direct perception what is being described, the gurus of the precious Kagyu, fathers and sons, say, “It is treading on the levels of the Great Vehicle.”

ii. Honing in on appearance

Every appearance is one’s own mind; as is said in the *Vajra Dohās*:

By that, all phenomena, every one,
Will be realised as one’s own mind.

Generally, in relation to this appearance, from a single basis very many things come forth: appearances of deep delusion like a dream, an illusion, direct perception; appearances of experience. How, though, could any of them be separate from one’s own mind? They are not! Therefore, although the six classes looking at water in a bowl see different appearances, in fact those things are not really produced. Similarly, one being seeing another as an enemy produces anger, where relatives produce attachment, and others in between the two see the other only with a neutral tone. All of this is one’s own mind itself producing an exaggerated superface⁽²⁹³⁾. Regarding that, the sovereign of conquerors’ sons Maitrīpa said,

Phenomena, every one, are one’s own mind.
Seen as external facts, they are the confused rational mind.
Like a dream, they are empty of essence ...

meaning that appearances appear like this but are empty of a self-essence and that that emptiness explained as a non-affirming negation is deludedness over the meaning of suchness⁽²⁹⁴⁾. If the object is determined to be without truth, then grasping at truth in the appearances of the subject falls apart. The emptiness which is the hallmark of purification of grasping at truth, the one explained as established in truth, is the understanding in regard to the meaning of the way things are that does not fall apart; the way of appearances is not contradictory to the former⁽²⁹⁵⁾. Further to this, the Lord of Yogins, Laughing Vajra said,⁽²⁹⁶⁾

From the standpoint of the superfactual truth ...
There are not, let alone blockages, even buddhas themselves.

And he also said,

The skilful ones who realize it so
Do not see consciousness, they see wisdom.

Here, emptiness having the excellence of all aspects and supreme, unchanging great bliss are in unification⁽²⁹⁷⁾.

III. The Explanation of the Goodness of the End

Dedication is done by resting in the state free from referencing the three causes—the object of dedication, and so on. The three are explained as “the worldly way of referencing three in pāramitā dedication”. In regard to which: the cause of dedication is the virtue created; the object of dedication is buddhahood on account of sentient beings; the words of dedication are the stainless words of the conquerors so *The King of Aspiration Prayers for Excellent Conduct*, and so on should be done. Those are to be done at times of arising from a session, and so on.

The list of points explained like that, this good explanation that determines the definitive meaning, is not the domain of anyone other than fortunate beings. Therefore, please make a point of keeping it very secret.

The speech of the sages in the ways of the profound and vast
Realized as spoken brings the unhindered definitive meaning;
I dedicate the virtue of having summed up that meaning into something easy to
understand
To the attainment that is the finalisation of virtue’s goodness in every way.
From the river of stainless intellect,
Those driven by karma act out in contaminated muck;
I see this kind of horrendous conduct and,
Seeing it, have a special faith in the conquerors and their sons.
This vast generosity, the generosity of dharma,
Is medicine for all of the migrators produced from it.
By it may the rank of the conquerors be obtained
And may migrators’ minds be moistened with lucid faith⁽²⁹⁸⁾.

At the insistence of Sakyong Dondrub Dorje Palzangpo, a member of the royal caste of Sahor, the Buddhist monk Ngawang Norbu composed this in the great palace at Tagtser and had this to say⁽²⁹⁹⁾:

*If you look at the glory of the higher places, you will see that it is the cause of
unsatisfactoriness;
If you look at the lower places, you will see that there is no liberation once you are
in that mire;
For the classes in between, this conduct in accord with dharma
Is indeed the force that accumulates hundreds of merits!
Involvement in worldly doings only creates more of the same
And if you miss doing even one, you are harassed by all!
This divine, holy dharma in which all doings are happy ones,
I have, by the fortune of previous training, obtained.*

Sarva Mangalam!

Glossary

Actuality, gnas lugs: A key term in the Vajra Vehicle in general. It is one of a pair of terms, the other being snang lugs. This term means how any given situation actually is and its counterpart means how something appears. In short, something could appear in many different ways, depending on the circumstances at the time and on the being perceiving it. However, regardless of circumstances, it will always have its own actuality, its own situation of how it really is. You could also think of this pair of terms as meaning “a thing’s reality and its surface appearance”. Note that this term also gets special use in Great Completion. In that case there is less sense of it being part of the pair and a much stronger sense of it talking about a reality that is present and which actually is that way.

Affliction, nyon mongs: this term is usually translated as emotion or disturbing emotion etcetera. However, the Buddha was much more specific about the meaning of this word. The Buddha said that passion, aggression, ignorance, and so on, are afflictions, that is, they were something that afflicted you. Buddha did not talk about “emotion” meaning a movement of mind but specifically used the term “affliction”. This is one of many terms that has lost most of its meaning by its common mistranslation.

Alaya, kun gzhi: this term, if translated, is usually translated as all-base or thereabouts. It means a range that underlies something else; an underlying basis for something else. It is used in several different ways in the Buddhist teaching and changes to a different meaning in case. All in all, it means a space of mind that underlies many other minds that come from it.

Alteration, altered, same as contrivance q.v.

Assurance, gdeng: often translated as confidence, this term means more than confidence. This term has the full meaning of assurance with the extra meaning that that contains compared to confidence. A bird, as it flies in space, has the assurance that it will not fall to the ground because of knowing that it has wings and the training it obtained in how to fly as a fledgling; the person who can liberate the afflictions because of his direct perceptions of the essence of mind has the assurance of liberation.

Bliss, clarity, and no-thought, bde gsal mi rtog pa: mentioned in this text as three temporary experiences that practitioners invariably meet in meditation. Bliss is ease of the body and/or mind, clarity is the experience of extraordinary clarity of mind, and no-thought is the experience literally of no thoughts happening in the mind. There is another understanding of these three not as temporary experiences to be eschewed but final experiences of realization.

Clarity, gsal ba: when you see this term, it should be understood as an abbreviation of ’od gsal ba, luminosity. It is not another factor of mind distinct from luminosity but is merely a convenient abbreviation in both Indian and Tibetan dharma language for the longer term, luminosity. See “Luminosity” in this glossary for more.

Clinging, zhen pa: dualistic mind that takes things that are not true, not pure, as being true, pure, etcetera and then, because of seeing them as highly desirable attaches itself or clings to those things. It acts as a kind of glue that keeps you with the things of cyclic existence, such as thoughts.

Complexion, mdangs: a special term of Great Completion. It is related to the more general term “output” used in both Mahāmudrā and Great Completion q.v. However, it is a refined term of Great Completion alone. It conveys not just the sense of what is given off by the emptiness factor of mind but adds the sense of the complexion of the emptiness or, you could also say, its lustre.

Confusion, 'khrul pa: the Tibetan term means fundamental delusion's confusion of taking things the wrong way. This is not the other meaning in English of having lots of thoughts and being confused about it. It is much more fundamental than that. The definition in Tibetan is “confusion is the appearance to rational mind of something being present when it is not” and refers for example to seeing any object, such as a table, as being truly present when in fact it is present only as mere appearance which has occurred in a process of interdependent arising.

Contrivance, contrived, bcos pa: something which has been altered from its native state or the process of making that alteration.

Cyclic existence, Skt. saṃsāra, Tib. 'khor ba: the type of existence that sentient beings have which is that they continue on from one existence to another, always within the enclosure of births that are produced by ignorance and experienced as unsatisfactory.

Dharmakaya, chos sku: the mind aspect of a buddha which, in the Thorough Cut system, is the fruition level of the direct perception of the essence of mind.

Dharmata, chos nyid: literally dharma-ness. A dharma is a phenomenon so, what it is at core, its actual reality, is its dharma-ness, or its isness.

Discursive thought, rnam rtog: this means more than just the superficial thought that is heard as a voice in the head. It includes the entirety of conceptual process that arises due to mind contacting any object of any of the senses. Discursive thought here translates from the Sanskrit original where the meaning is “conceptual thought that arises from the mind wandering among the various superficialities perceived in the doors of the senses”.

Elaboration, spro ba: to be producing thoughts.

Enlightenment Mind, Skt. bodhicitta, Tib. byang chub sems: A key term of the Great Vehicle. The term refers to the mind connected with the enlightenment of a truly complete buddha (as opposed to an arhat). As such, it is a mind that is concerned with bringing all sentient beings to that same level of buddhahood. It refers both to the mind of a person on the path and to the mind of a buddha who has completed the path, therefore it is not “mind striving for enlightenment” as is so often translated but enlightenment mind, that kind of mind which is connected with the full enlightenment of a truly complete buddha. The term is used in the conventional Great Vehicle and also in the Vajra Vehicle.

Entity, ngo bo: see under Essence in this glossary.

Equipoise and post-attainment, mnyam bzhag and rjes thob: often mis-translated as meditation and post-meditation, “equipoise and post-attainment” is a correct rendering. There is great meaning in the words and that meaning is lost by the looser translation. Note that equipoise and post-attainment are used throughout the three vehicles and that they have a very different meaning in Great Completion than in lower vehicles.

Essence, ngo bo: a key term used throughout Buddhist theory. The original in Sanskrit and the term in Tibetan, too, has both meanings of “essence” and “entity”. In some situations the term has more the first meaning and in others, the second. For example, when speaking of mind and mind’s essence, it is referring to the core or essential part within mind. On the other hand, when speaking of fire or some other thing, there is the entity, fire, and so on, and its characteristics, such as heat, and so on; in this case, it is not an essence but an entity.

Expanse, Skt. dhātu, Tib. dbyings: A Sanskrit term with over twenty meanings in Sanskrit and many of those meanings also in the Tibetan. In this book, it is used in one specific sense of the Vajra Vehicle teachings where it is the practical term for the experience of emptiness. In this sense, it means a whole “range” the whole extent of possible experience because that entire extent is covered by emptiness. Where emptiness is a very dry term, this term gives the sense of the full extent of experience that is known as the basic space within which all phenomena appear.

Fictional Truth, kun rdzob bden pa: one of a pair of terms; the other is Superfactual Truth, q.v. The usual translation as “relative truth” is not the meaning at all of this key term. The term means the level of reality (*truth*) made up by the obscuration of an ordinary person’s mind. Because this is an obscured version of actual truth it is *fictional*. However, it is true for the beings who make it up, so it is still called *truth*. There is a good discussion of fictional and superfactual truth in [glossary](#).

Fictional Truth Enlightenment Mind, kun rdzob bden pa’i byang chub sems: One of a pair of terms; the other is Superfactual Truth Enlightenment Mind. See under Fictional and Superfactual truth for information about those terms. Enlightenment mind is defined as two types. The fictional type is the conventional type. It is explained as consisting of love and great compassion within the framework of an intention to obtain truly complete enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. The superfactual truth type is the ultimate type. It is explained as the enlightenment mind that is directly perceiving emptiness. These explanations belong to the conventional Great Vehicle.

Great Vehicle, Skt. mahāyāna, Tib. theg pa chen po: The Buddha’s teachings as a whole can be summed up into three vehicles where a vehicle is defined as that which can carry you to a certain destination. The first vehicle, called the Lesser Vehicle, contains the teachings designed to get an individual moving on the spiritual path through showing the unsatisfactory state of cyclic existence and an emancipation from that. The path shown though is only concerned with a personal emancipation and fails to take account of all of the beings that there are in existence. There used to be eighteen schools of Lesser Vehicle in India but the only one surviving these days is the Theravada of south-east Asia. The Greater Vehicle is a step up

from that. The Buddha explained that it was great in comparison to the Lesser Vehicle for seven reasons. The first of those is that it is concerned with truly complete enlightenment of a truly complete buddha for the sake of every sentient being where the Lesser Vehicle is only concerned with a personal liberation that is not truly complete enlightenment and which is only achieved for the sake of that practitioner. The Great Vehicle has two divisions. There is a conventional Great Vehicle in which the path is taught in a logical, conventional way. There is also an unconventional Great Vehicle in which the path is taught in an unconventional and very direct way. This latter vehicle is called the Vajra Vehicle because it relies on showing the innermost, indestructible (vajra) fact of reality of one's own mind. The teachings in this book, while they do go through the Lesser and conventional Great Vehicles are principally concerned with the Vajra Vehicle.

Ground, gzhi: the first member of the formulation of ground, path, and fruition. Ground, path, and fruition is the way that the teachings of the path of oral instruction belonging to the Vajra Vehicle are presented to students. Ground refers to the basic situation as it is.

Introduction and To Introduce; ngos sprad and ngos sprod pa respectively: This pair of terms is usually translated in the U.S.A. these days as “pointing out” “and “to point out” but this is yet another common mistake that has become, unfortunately, entrenched. The terms are the standard terms used in day to day life for the situation in which one person introduces another person to someone or something. They are the exact same words as our English “introduction” and “to introduce”. In the Vajra Vehicle, these terms are specifically used for the situation in which one person introduces another to the nature of the person's own mind. As a matter of interest, there is another term in Tibetan for “pointing out”. That term is never used for the purpose here because here, no-one points out anything. Rather, a person is introduced by another to a part of that person that he has forgotten about. There is a further problem here which is that, if “pointing out” is used for this term, when the actual Tibetan term for “pointing out” is used, there will be confusion over the terms.

Isness: a translation of dharmatā, q.v.

Key points, gnad: it is not apparent from the wording but a “key point” is not a point of understanding that you have conceptually in your mind and take to meditation practice but is an issue belonging to the actual process of meditation itself. Meditation as a process has key points or issues within it and instructions such as the “Three Lines” are given so that the practitioner can connect a correct understanding which is derived from those instructions with those issues as they are actually present in the meditation itself. This is worth thinking over because the common understanding in English of “key point” is an instruction to be applied but that is quite incorrect; the instructions are applied to your meditation in order to work the key points that are present as issues in the meditation itself. They are the buttons existing in the meditation for you to be press using the instructions, such as the Three Lines, that allow you to hit the buttons.

Lesser Vehicle, Skt. Hīnayāna, Tib. theg pa dman pa: see under Great Vehicle.

Liveliness, rtsal: another key term in Mahāmudrā and Great Completion. The term means the potential that something contains for it to produce or display some kind of expression. For

example, a baby horse has the innate ability that will later come out as its liveliness of galloping and prancing as a steed. However, the term also is used in situations where the energy is actually happening, that is, it is not mere potential any more but is the energy at the time of its expression. The term that seems to fit correctly in English is “spunk”, unfortunately not many people know this word well. It is the potential and the expression of dynamic display that something has within it.

Luminosity, 'od gsal ba: the core of mind, called mind's essence, has two aspects, parts, or factors as they are called. One is emptiness and the other is knowing. Luminosity is a metaphor for the fundamental knowing quality of the essence of mind. It is sometimes translated as “clear light” but that is a mistake that comes from not understanding how the words of the Tibetan go together. It does not refer to a light that is clear but refers to the illuminative property which is the hallmark of mind. Mind knows, that is what it does. Thus, it has the property of luminosity which knows its own content. Both in Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist literature, the term is frequently abbreviated just to gsal ba, “clarity”, with the same meaning.

Mind, sems: conventional minding which occurs because there is ignorance.

Mindfulness, dran pa: the ability to keep mind on an object of the senses. With alertness, it is one of the two causes of developing śhamatha.

Output, gdangs: A general Tibetan term meaning that which is given off by something else, for example, the sound that comes from a loudspeaker. In Mahāmudrā and Great Completion, it the general term used to refer to what is given off by the emptiness factor of the essence of mind. Emptiness is the empty condition of the essence of mind, like space. However, that emptiness has liveliness and liveliness comes off it as compassion, and all the other qualities of enlightened mind, and, equally, all the apparatus of dualistic mind. All of this is called its output. Note that the Great Completion teachings have a special word that is a more refined version of this term. See “complexion” for that.

Post-attainment: see equipoise.

Prajña, shes rab: a name for a state of mind that makes precise distinctions between this and that. Although it is sometimes translated as “wisdom”, that is not correct because it is, generally speaking, a mental event belonging to dualistic mind.

Preserve, skyong ba: an important term in Thorough Cut. It means to keep something as it is, to nurture something in the sense of keeping it just so and not losing it. In the case of Thorough Cut, it specifically means that you are not using any rational process or effort to keep it in place, rather you are following the instructions received from your guru on allowing it to be as it is. This is also always applied to the state, q.v. and the phrase “preserve the state” is a key oral instruction in the Thorough Cut system.

Rational mind, blo: the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions use this term pejoratively for the most part. In the Great Completion tradition, blo is the dualistic mind and hence is the villain so to speak which needs to be removed from the equation in order to obtain enlightenment. This term is consistently translated as rational mind throughout this text since merely translating it as mind,

which is the common approach these days, utterly loses the importance of the word. This is not just mind but this is the mind that creates the situation of this and that (ratio in Latin) and which is always at the root of all sentient beings problems and which is the very opposite of the essence of mind. This is a key term and it should be noted and not just glossed over as “mind”.

Rigpa, rig pa: the key words of key words in the system of the Thorough Cut. The equivalent in the Mahāmudrā system is “Tha mal gyi shaypa” q.v. Rigpa literally means to know in the sense of “I see!”. It is used at all levels of meaning from the coarsest everyday sense of knowing something to the deepest sense of knowing something as presented in the system of Thorough Cut. The system of Thorough Cut uses this term in a very special sense, though it still retains its basic meaning of “to know”. To translate it as “awareness” which is common practice these days is a poor practice; there are many kinds of awareness but there is only one rigpa and besides, rigpa is substantially more than just awareness. Since this is such an important term and since it lacks an equivalent in English, I choose not to translate it. However, it will be helpful in reading the text to understanding the meaning as just given.

Secret Mantra, gsang sngags: the name for the second of the two parts of the Mahāyāna school, that is, the vajrayāna.

Seven Dharmas of Vairochana, rnam par snang mdzad chos bdun: are the seven aspects of Vairochana’s posture which used for formal meditation practice. The posture for the legs is the one called “vajra posture” or vajrāsana. In it, the legs are crossed one on top of the other, right on top of left. The advantage of this posture is that, of the five basic winds of the subtle body, the downward-clearing wind is caused to enter the central channel. The posture for the hands is called the equipoise mudrā. The right palm is placed on top of the left palm and the two thumbs are just touching, raised up over the palms. The advantage of this posture is that the Fire-Accompanying Wind is caused to enter the central channel. The posture for the spine is that the spine should be held straight. The advantage of this posture is that the Pervader Wind is caused to enter the central channel. The posture for the shoulders is one in which the shoulders are held up slightly in a particular way. The advantage of this posture is that Upward-Moving Wind is caused to enter the central channel. The neck and chin are held in a particular posture: the neck is drawn up a little and the chin slightly hooked in towards the throat. The advantage of this posture is that the Life-Holder Wind is caused to enter the central channel. The tip of the tongue is joined with the forward part of the palate and the jaws are relaxed, with the teeth and lips allowed to sit normally. The eyes are directed down past the tip of the nose, into space. Placing the gaze in this way keeps the clarity of mind and prevents sinking, agitation, and so on.

Shamatha, gzhi gnas: one of the two main practices of meditation required in the Buddhist system for gaining insight into reality. It develops one-pointedness of mind. The completion of the practice is a mind that sits stably on its object without any effort. Essentially, it allows the other practice, vipaśhyānā, to focus on its object unwaveringly.

State, ngang: this is a key term in Mahāmudrā and Great Completion. Unfortunately it is often not translated and in so doing much meaning is lost. Alternatively, it is often translated as

“within” which also is incorrect. The term means a “state”. A state is an ongoing situation and that is exactly what the Tibetan is referring to. It has the full sense of “a particular state that the practitioner is in”. There are many states on the path. In Great Completion, the word is often used in the Thorough Cut without adjective to refer to the all-important experience of the essence of mind, whatever that might be at the time. Hence “the state”, “preserving the state”, etc. See also “Preserve”.

Stoppageless, ’gag pa med pa: A key term of Mahāmudrā and Great Completion that is usually mistranslated. It is usually translated as “unceasing”. However, this is a different verb. It refers to the situation in which one thing is not being stopped by another thing. It means “not stopped”, “without stoppage”, “not blocked and prevented by something else” that is, stoppageless. The verb form associated with it is “not stopped” q.v.

Superfactual Truth, don dam bden pa: one of a pair of terms; the other is Fictional Truth, q.v. The usual translation as “absolute truth” is not the meaning at all of this key term. The term means the level of reality(*truth*) which is *superior* to the ordinary person’s mistaken kind of reality and which is *factual* compared to the fictional reality of the ordinary person.

Superfice, superficialities, rnam pa: in discussions of mind, a distinction is made between the entity of mind which is a mere knower and the superficial things that appear on its surface and which are known by it. In other words, the superficialities are the various things which pass over the surface of mind but which are not mind. Superficialities are all the specifics that constitute appearance, for example, the colour white within a moment of visual consciousness, the vroom of a motorbike within an ear consciousness, and so on.

Temporary experience, nyams: when one practises meditation, various experiences occur which are simply part of the path and are not realizations, per se. These experiences are thus temporary experiences.

Tha mal gyi shaypa, tha mal gyi shes pa: the path term used in the Mahāmudrā tradition to indicate mind’s essence. In Dzogchen, the equivalent term is “rigpa”. Both words are used by practitioners as a sort of code word for their own, personal experience of the essence of mind. These words are secret because of the power they are connected and should be kept that way.

Tha mal gyi shaypa is often referred to as “ordinary mind”, a term that was established by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche for his students. However, there are two problems with that word. Firstly, “tha mal” does not mean “ordinary”. It means “common”, something that is common to everyone. This is well attested to in the writings of the Kagyu forefathers. Secondly, this is not mind, given that mind is used throughout this book to mean the dualistic mind of beings in cyclic existence. Rather this is “shes pa”, the most general term for all kinds of awareness or knower. In short, it is the kind of non-dualistic knower that is common to everyone.

From a practitioner’s perspective, there is little difference between the two terms. However, as Tsoknyi Rinpoche points out,

There is a deep point concerning what is explained in the extraordinary levels of Dzogchen as the complexion aspect of the rigpa⁽⁸¹⁾ and what is explained in Mahāmudrā as the luminosity aspect⁽⁸²⁾. Dzogchen says that real rigpa is to bring forth the deep state which is the luminosity part without the slightest bit of compartmentalizing—the actual original, naked dharmakāya—and there is a slight point of discussion over that.

There is that sort of discussion when these things are being explained but, from the perspective of an individual receiving the instructions and meditating, the instructions on Mahāmudrā could become the accomplishment of Dzogchen and vice-versa. That difference is explained in the texts but in fact it depends on the individual.

Thorough Cut, khregs chod: one of the two practices of the innermost level of Great Completion practice. The other is Direct Crossing. Thorough Cut is a practice in which the main point is to cut decisively through to Alpha Purity.

Transparency, zang thal: perhaps this term would be better not translated. The term is a special term of experience used in both Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen. It means that, because expanse and the knower—described as rigpa in Dzogchen—are unified, there is the experience of total unimpededness. The practitioner is outside the normal constraints of impure appearances and experiences this as a totally open transparency of what is experienced.

Unaltered or uncontrived, ma bcos pa: the opposite of “altered” and “contrived”. Something which has not been altered from its native state; something which has been left just as it is.

Vajra Vehicle, Skt. vajrayāna, Tib. rdo rje'i theg pa: see under Great Vehicle.

Vipashyana, lhag mthong: one of the two main practices of meditation required in the Buddhist system for gaining insight into reality. It is the insight that directly sees reality. It is aided by śhamatha which keeps it focussed on the reality.

Wisdom, ye shes: this term translates the original Sanskrit, jñāna. Jñāna has many meanings but overall has the sense of just knowing. In the Buddhist usage it is very literal, meaning the most basic sense we have of knowing which is the knowing that is there from the beginning in the core of mind. Because of this meaning, the Tibetans translated it as “the particular awareness which has been there from the beginning”. This has been translated into English in various ways but, as long as the meaning just mentioned is understood, that will be enough.

In the tantras, there are many methods for bringing the students to this primordial awareness. Some of them bring the student first to something which is similar to the wisdom so there is the term, simile wisdom⁽⁶¹⁾; this is often translated as example wisdom but that is being literal to the extent of losing the meaning. The simile wisdom is a similitude of the real wisdom, the actual wisdom which is shown in various ways, including by the fourth empowerment. Real wisdom⁽⁶²⁾ is the opposite of simile wisdom; it is wisdom in fact, not the one which is just a similitude of the real wisdom.

About Padma Karpo Translation Committee, The Author Tony Duff, And Supports for Study

I have been encouraged over the years by all of my teachers to pass on the knowledge I have accumulated in a lifetime dedicated to study and practice, primarily in the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism. On the one hand, they have encouraged me to teach. On the other, they are concerned that, while many general books on Buddhism have been and are being published, there are few books that present the actual texts of the tradition. Therefore they, together with a number of major figures in the Buddhist book publishing world, have also encouraged me to translate and publish high quality translations of individual texts of the tradition.

My teachers always remark with great appreciation on the extraordinary amount of teaching that I have heard in this life. It allows for highly informed, accurate translations of a sort not usually seen. Briefly, I spent the 1970's studying, practising, then teaching the Gelugpa system at Chenrezig Institute, Australia, where I was a founding member and also the first Australian to be ordained as a monk in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. In 1980, I moved to the United States to study at the feet of the Vidyadhara Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. I stayed in his Vajradhatu community, now called Shambhala, where I studied and practised all the Karma Kagyu, Nyingma, and Shambhala teachings being presented there and was a senior member of the Nalanda Translation Committee. After the vidyadhara's nirvana, I moved in 1992 to Nepal, where I have been continuously involved with the study, practise, translation, and teaching of the Kagyu system and especially of the Nyingma system of Great Completion. In recent years, I have spent extended times in Tibet with the greatest living Tibetan masters of Great Completion, receiving very pure transmissions of the ultimate levels of this teaching directly in Tibetan and practising them there in retreat. In that way, I have studied and practised extensively not in one Tibetan tradition as is usually done, but in three of the four Tibetan traditions—Gelug, Kagyu, and Nyingma—and also in the Theravada tradition, too.

With that as a basis, I have taken a comprehensive and long term approach to the work of translation. For any language, one first must have the lettering needed to write the language. Therefore, as a member of the Nalanda Translation Committee, I spent some years in the 1980's making Tibetan word-processing software and high-quality Tibetan fonts. After that, reliable lexical works are needed. Therefore, during the 1990's I spent some years writing the *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* and a set of treatises on Tibetan grammar, preparing a variety of key Tibetan reference works needed for the study and translation of Tibetan Buddhist texts, and giving our Tibetan software the tools needed to translate and research Tibetan texts. During this time, I also translated full-time for various Tibetan gurus and ran the Drukpa Kagyu Heritage Project—at the time the largest project in Asia for the preservation of Tibetan Buddhist texts. With the dictionaries, grammar texts, and specialized software in place, and a wealth of knowledge, I turned my attention in the year 2000 to the translation and publication of important texts of Tibetan Buddhist literature.

Padma Karpo Translation Committee (PKTC) was set up to provide a home for the translation and publication work. The committee focusses on producing books containing the best of Tibetan literature, and, especially, books that meet the needs of practitioners. At the time of writing, PKTC has published a wide range of books that, collectively, make a complete program of study for those practising Tibetan Buddhism, and especially for those interested in the higher tantras. All in all, you will find many books both free and for sale on the PKTC web-site. Most are available both as paper editions and e-books.

It would take up too much space here to present an extensive guide to our books and how they can be used as the basis for a study program. However, a guide of that sort is available on the PKTC web-site, whose address is on the copyright page of this book and we recommend that you read it to see how this book fits into the overall scheme of PKTC publications. In short, given that this book is about Kagyu Mahamudra, other books of interest would be:

1. *A Juggernaut of the Non-Dual View, Ultimate Teachings of the Second Drukchen Gyalwang Je*, a set of sixty-six teachings on the ultimate view by one of the early masters of the Drukpa Kagyu;
2. *Gampopa's Mahāmudrā, The Five-Part Mahāmudrā of the Kagyus*, a set of several texts showing the view of Mahāmudrā and how to practise it;
3. *Gampopa Teaches Essence Mahāmudrā, Interviews with his Heart Disciples, Dusum Khyenpa, and Others*, a complete set of teachings on Mahāmudrā given in personal interviews with great yogins, which repeatedly clarify the non-dual view;
4. *The Bodyless Dakini Dharma: The Dakini Hearing Lineage of the Kagyus*, with several very early teachings on the view;
5. *Maitrīpa's Writings on the View*, several teachings on the view from the “father of other emptiness”;
6. *Theory and Practice of Other Emptiness Taught Through Milarepa's Songs*, a complete explanation of the view of other emptiness given through two songs of Milarepa which are famous for their expositions of the non-dual view;
7. *Dusum Khyenpa's Songs and Teachings*.

We make a point of including, where possible, the relevant Tibetan texts in Tibetan script in our books. We also make them available in electronic editions that can be downloaded free from our web-site, as discussed below. The Tibetan texts for this book are included at the back of the book and are available for download from the PKTC web-site.

Electronic Resources

PKTC has developed a complete range of electronic tools to facilitate the study and translation of Tibetan texts. For many years now, this software has been a prime resource for Tibetan Buddhist centres throughout the world, including in Tibet itself. It is available through the PKTC web-site.

The wordprocessor TibetDoc has the only complete set of tools for creating, correcting, and formatting Tibetan text according to the norms of the Tibetan language. It can also be used to make texts with mixed Tibetan and English or other languages. Extremely high quality Tibetan fonts, based on the forms of Tibetan calligraphy learned from old masters from pre-Communist Chinese Tibet, are also available. Because of their excellence, these typefaces have achieved a legendary status amongst Tibetans.

TibetDoc is used to prepare electronic editions of Tibetan texts in the PKTC text input office in Asia. Tibetan texts are often corrupt so the input texts are carefully corrected prior to distribution. After that, they are made available through the PKTC web-site. These electronic texts are not careless productions like so many of the Tibetan texts found on the web, but are highly reliable editions useful to non-scholars and scholars alike. Some of the larger collections of these texts are for purchase, but most are available for free download.

The electronic texts can be read, searched, and even made into an electronic library using either TibetDoc or our other software, TibetD Reader. Like TibetDoc, TibetD Reader is advanced software with many capabilities made specifically to meet the needs of reading and researching Tibetan texts. PKTC software is for purchase but we make a free version of TibetD Reader available for free download on the PKTC web-site.

A key feature of TibetDoc and Tibet Reader is that Tibetan terms in texts can be looked up on the spot using PKTC's electronic dictionaries. PKTC also has several electronic dictionaries—some Tibetan-Tibetan and some Tibetan-English—and a number of other reference works. The *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* is renowned for its completeness and accuracy.

This combination of software, texts, reference works, and dictionaries that work together seamlessly has become famous over the years. It has been the basis of many, large publishing projects within the Tibetan Buddhist community around the world for over thirty years and is popular amongst all those needing to work with Tibetan language or deepen their understanding of Buddhism through Tibetan texts.

Notes

1. He is also known as Tilo, Telo, Tailo and each also with a “pa” on the end in Tibetan. In earlier Tibetan literature at least, he is usually called Tailopa not Tilopa.
2. Phagdrü is the common abbreviation for Phagmo Drupa.
3. See the section [supports for study](#).
4. This is exactly the meaning of the original Sanskrit “mudrā” in this case—a sign that is displayed and by being displayed conveys meaning.
5. Throughout this book “mind” translates the Tibetan term “sems” and the Sanskrit “chitta”. It specifically means the type of mind that beings in saṃsāra—cyclic existence—have. Mind is a complex process based on ignorance. It has a lot of paraphernalia that goes with it; the conceptual baggage of dualism. However, mind also has a core that is not ignorant of reality. This core has many names: a few used in this book are “mindness”, “essence of mind”, “nature of mind”, and so on. Mindness is the working basis of the tantric path. Its very existence is the reason it is possible to shed the excess baggage of mind and return to wisdom which is the type of mind that buddhas have and which is mindness in its purest form.
6. This is from the text *The Questions of Phagmo Drupa* in Gampopa’s *Collected Works*. The European system of quoting page numbers and volumes of a source does not fit well with the Tibetan system of publishing texts. There are often different printings of the same edition, each with its own pagination and, since it is impossible to predict which version a reader might obtain, there is no point in quoting page and volume numbers. Tibetans themselves simply quote the source and that is what I have done.
7. From the same text as the previous quotation.
8. Tib. gdams ngag. There are several types of oral instruction used in Buddhism. What is meant here is oral instruction in general. It should not be confused with the very special oral instruction called foremost instruction.
9. Skt. bodhichitta, Tib. byang chub sems. The term does not merely mean “mind for enlightenment” or “enlightened attitude” as it is sometimes translated; in some contexts it also means “mind of enlightenment”. Thus enlightenment mind, which translates the Sanskrit and Tibetan exactly, is correct.
10. Tib. ngo sprod (transitive verb and noun) and ngo ’phrod (intransitive verb). A common term in Tibetan language meaning “to give / be given an introduction”. It is the standard term used when one person introduces another person to a third person or thing that they have not met before or do not remember.

The term is used in the vajra vehicle in exactly the same way it is used in ordinary life but in a

specific context. In the vajra vehicle it is used to indicate that the guru gives the disciple an introduction to the core of his or her own conventional mind. In this case, the guru *introduces* a person, quite literally, to the essence of his own mind.

It is popular these days to translate the vajra vehicle usage as “pointing out” but that is not what the term says. The term does mean and is used to mean “an introduction given so that, once introduced, you now know the thing or person introduced”. Furthermore, there is another phrase in Tibetan used for difference purposes which does exactly mean “pointing out” and the two can conflict, thus it really is an error to translate this term as “pointing out”. A proper understanding and use of this term is crucial to a proper understanding of the vajra vehicle system, so the mistaken “pointing out” has not been used in this book.

11. Skt. Foremost instruction, Tib. man ngag. One of several types of oral instruction. The term literally means “prime” or “foremost” type of “instruction” and conveys the sense of the best way of all possible ways of instruction for conveying a meaning to another person. This type of instruction comes out of direct personal experience and has great power to transform the mind of the listener, much more so than any other type of instruction. It is of crucial in the tantras. For example, the highest system of tantra, Great Completion, is also known as “the Foremost instruction section” because at the highest level, foremost instruction is the most direct way to get the student to realize things as they are.

The importance of this type of oral instruction, and hence why its name needs to be clearly distinguished from the names of the many other types of oral instruction, can be understood from Situ Chokyi Jungnay’s text. He says that the instructions used to impart the realization of Mahāmudrā to students cannot be just any type of oral instruction but must be the type that is “an experiential kind of instruction ... which are not mere ornaments to the word of the Conqueror”. With this, he is saying that foremost instruction are not the usual type of oral instruction used to clarify the words of the Buddha (and other great teachers) that operate simply by adding more to the meaning till it is clear; they are much more than that. Foremost instruction are a special type of instruction that incorporate the power of personal experience and realization of either the teacher himself or the teacher’s teachers. These words are usually kept very private and, because of that, have a lot of power when they are used, much more so than ordinary types of oral instruction.

Unfortunately, this term is usually translated in a way that does not allow the reader to distinguish it from the several other types of oral instruction, causing a serious loss of meaning. For this reason, I have kept the Sanskrit term.

12. Tib. ras pa. A repa was a yogin who wore only a thin cotton cloth called a “re”. Repas could do this, even in the extreme cold of the snowy mountains of Tibet because of their yogic practice that produced warmth in the body.

13. Introduction has the meaning of introduction has described in note 10. Dharmatā in this case is not very technical, it is a way of saying “reality”.

14. Sanskrit vidya, Tib. rig pa. One of the most important terms of Buddhism and especially of the tantras, it is often translated as “awareness” these days but that fails to convey the meaning. The

Sanskrit, which becomes the root of English words like “video”, “vision”, and the like, implies an active knowing, in which things are clearly seen. It has a sense of “sight of”, “the seeing of”, and in some cases “insight into”.

In Sanskrit and Tibetan it is has both noun and verb forms and both are frequently used. Unfortunately the verb usage has been lost on translators and it is usually translated as a noun, often with loss of key meaning. For example, the “ignorance” we usually speak of in English when talking about Buddhist view actually means “not rig-ing”; it is a loss of sight, failure to see reality—and that meaning is very evident in Sanskrit and Tibetan. The opposite of ignorance is “to rig” the reality, in which case one is either reversing out of loss of sight of reality or has gained full insight into it, and has become a buddha.

As Gampopa says, there are only two sides to existence. The side of those who have sight of reality—that is, the side in which there is “rigging” of reality or there is possession of rigpa of the reality—and the side of those who do not have sight of reality—that is, the side in which there is “no rigging” of reality or there is possession of “not having rigpa”.

This rigpa, which is direct sight and knowledge of something, is an exceptionally important term and does not have an adequate English equivalent. Therefore, I am sticking my neck out and using the Tibetan term both as a noun (rigpa) and as a verb (to rig). Sanskrit usually works better than Tibetan for English audiences because Sanskrit has more ties with English. However, “rigpa” and “to rig” seem easier than variations on the Sanskrit “vid-” at the moment. Let us see what happens. Whatever else happens, we have to come up with a unique term in English for this term of terms in Buddhist thought. The word “awareness” that is so often used as the translation for rigpa is totally inadequate.

15. Gampopa’s expression sounds much more like a Dzogchen presentation than a Mahamudra presentation and it is noteworthy that, in his collected works, he frequently uses this kind of expression.

Here, he is saying to his disciples that you either have sight of reality or not and, if you do, that is where buddhahood lies, so he is going to give the requested introduction to buddhahood on the basis of rigpa. I will publish more from Gampopa’s collected works in the near future and explore his ways of presentation.

16. “Arouse the mind” is the term used in Mahāyanā literature to mean “arouse enlightenment mind”. This is the first instruction of the five parts.

17. The second of the five parts.

18. The third of the five parts.

19. The fourth of the five parts. From here, Gampopa continued on to give Phagmo Drupa and the other yogins present a lengthy instruction on the main practice, Mahāmudrā. The fifth the five parts is not mentioned explicitly in this interchange but Gampopa makes it clear in other places that dedication is the fifth part.

20. Of the Kagyu lineage.

21. “Introducing” here refers to giving the introduction as described in note 10.

22. Skt. chittata, Tib. sems nyid. Mindness is a specific term of the tantras. It is one of many terms meaning the essence of mind or the nature of mind. It conveys the sense of “what mind is at its very core”. It has sometimes been translated as “mind itself” but that is a misunderstanding of the Tibetan word “nyid”. The term does not mean “that thing mind” where mind, as already explained refers to dualistic mind. Rather, it means the very core of dualistic mind, what mind is at root, without all of the dualistic baggage.

A further point in choosing “mindness” for the translation is that it is an unmistakable term. This corresponds to the situation in both Sanskrit and Tibetan literature where the term stands out and cannot be mistaken for anything else. This should be compared with translations used up to now, such as “mind itself” which do not immediately signal a special term with specific meaning. Readers usually think that “mind itself” is just another reference to mind.

“Actuality of mind” is a ground term. It is used to describe the ground situation. It refers to the reality which is the inner core of mind as it actually is, regardless of whether you are a practitioner or not, a buddha or not. “Mindness” on the other hand is a path term. It refers to exactly the same thing as actuality of mind but does so from the practitioner’s perspective. It conveys the sense to a practitioner that he might still have baggage of dualistic mind that has not been purified yet but there is a core to that mind that he can work with.

Here, the guru gives the disciple an introduction to the actuality of mind. That actuality of mind is the inner nature of dualistic mind that will, when fully uncovered, become the mind of a buddha. The disciple experiences that as mindness and that gives the disciple the basis needed for proceeding with the practice. The practice is to purify all the obscurations so that mindness becomes fully uncovered. When it is fully uncovered, the disciple has reached the end of the path. At that time, the previously covered-over mindness is completely uncovered and is the mind of a buddha. At that point it is called “dharmakāya” where “dharmakāya” is one of several fruition terms that correspond to the ground and path terms indicated above.

23. That is, repeating one of the many prayers that arouses the two types of enlightenment mind, aspiring and entering.

24. Of the deity’s mantra.

25. The actuality of mind can be introduced at the more superficial level of the innate mind without fabrication of thoughts. This corresponds in essence to the practice of calm-abiding taught in the sūtras. Unfabricated in this case means that mind is just left alone, without any modification or alteration to its nature. It does not refer to the term meaning “unelaborated” (Tib. spros bral) which unfortunately is also sometimes translated as un-fabricated but which refers to putting an end to conceptual views altogether.

26. The last three sentences go together. Coming to rest completely requires that all states opposite to calm-abiding, which are summed up in the sūtras as sinking and agitation, are removed. In the Mahāmudrā way of doing things, it also requires the removal of certain wrong ideas, the doings of rational mind, which are summed up in the Mahāmudrā teachings in what are called the four points of

straying and the three deviations. The removal of these in this way is the removal of the obstacles to wisdom waking itself up, not the actual waking up.

In other words, the instruction here is saying that appearances are usually manifestations of dualistic mind however, if used properly, they can become the means for removing the energy that tends to make them manifestations of dualistic mind. Once that has happened, appearances can be further introduced as the innate reality itself manifesting. From that kind of introduction, appearances can be practised as the innate reality of mahāmudrā itself. When that has been accomplished, even appearances become the innate reality. One of the key points here is that the Mahāmudrā approach to reality uses appearances of the five senses—sights, sounds, and so on—as the doorway to the reality called Mahāmudrā. This differs from the approach of the other main teaching on reality, Mahāti, in which appearances are not the gateway to reality, rather, the luminosity of the innate mind itself is the gateway. In the end, the two systems come to the same point, though there is this subtle but crucial distinction between the two approaches. Mahāmudrā instructions do not discuss this because the whole system just depends on the use of appearances as the gateway. These instructions are very pithy and sum up a very large body of teaching. More of the meaning is contained in the other texts and explanations presented here. Full clarification must be obtained from a teacher, in person.

27. The state is a technical term of very great significance in Mahāmudrā. The term is used throughout the book, mainly with this specific meaning. See the glossary entries “state” and “preserving the state”.

28. At this point, the practitioner has developed some ability to rest in the state of the innate nature without fabrications. While the practitioner is resting in that state, thoughts will flash forth. Direct recognition of the nature of the thoughts is the direct recognition of the dharmakāya, as Gampopa taught. In that kind of process, dharmakāya liberates itself with no other antidote needed, thus, the thoughts, produced on the basis of the various doors of consciousness, are now turned into wisdom waking itself up. The practitioner habituates himself to this and, by doing so, his mindness is increasingly cleared of obscurations until it eventually becomes the dharmakāya of a buddha. This section corresponds to what is called vipaśhyānā, meaning the practice of insight, in the sūtra system.

29. Here he is making a play on the Tibetan way of glossing the Tibetan word for buddha which consists of two parts. The first, “wakefulness” refers to the fruition of the dharmakāya, and the second, “expansion” to the fruition of the form kāyas.

30. In other words, the five parts include both practices that accumulate merit and practices that accumulate wisdom. Since there are both types of accumulation in the practice, there are, correspondingly, two types of dedication to be made. Each type of accumulation has to be dedicated according to its own way of being produced, which is that merit is dedicated within a conceptual framework and wisdom is dedicated within a non-conceptual framework. The next text and its commentary give more information about this.

31. Tib. ’gro ba. “Migrator” is one of several common terms meaning “sentient being”. Sentient beings are constantly forced to go here and there from one rebirth to another by the power of their karma. They are like flies caught in a jar, constantly buzzing back and forth.

32. The lineage of the Drukpa Kagyu starting from Phagmo Drupa, going through Tsangpa Gyare, and

then on through Lingje Repa.

33. Tib. brgyad khri bzhi stong chos kyi phung po. The teaching of the Buddha's dharma contains eight-four thousand individual dharma teachings. As a whole it is called "the heap of eighty-four thousand dharmas". It is not "the eight-four thousand heaps of dharma" as is sometimes incorrectly translated.

34. That is, penetration of the nature of reality.

35. The fourth empowerment of the empowerment system of the vajra vehicle is called the word empowerment. Of the four empowerments in the system, this one most directly introduces a person to the actuality of his own mind. It is an elegant way here of saying "introduction to the nature of mind".

36. Tib. bde bar gshegs pa'i khams. "Element of the sugatas". One of many names for the tathāgatagarbha or buddha nature. It is the element of being that allows a person to become a sugata or buddha. When uncovered fully, it is naked reality, and that reality is called Mahāmudrā in this system. The term "element of the sugatas" is used when practice is being discussed compared to the term "element of the tathāgatas" which is used when theory is being discussed.

37. Son of the conquerors is an epithet for bodhisatvas in general.

38. Milarepa's clever play on words is hard to understand in English. A picture, for example like in a lithograph, is made up of lots of dots. So there are rain drops in the first line, droplets of fat in the second, all of which are connected with this illusory body of a house, about to collapse. All these dots or drops make up the dots of the picture, which in the end is death.

39. The teaching on unsatisfactoriness, the First Truth of the Noble Ones, points out that there are two kinds of unsatisfactoriness. There is the result, which is what we experience at any given moment, and which we tend to think is the unsatisfactoriness being talked about in that first truth. However, in addition to that, there is the fact the current unsatisfactoriness is nearly always the seed of a future result of more unsatisfactoriness. When you realize the depth of this self-perpetuating cycle of unsatisfactoriness, it is horrifying. And that is the point at which renunciation comes.

40. An epithet of Maitreya.

41. See note 35.

42. He is explaining how to develop each of the four parts of the first two immeasurable thoughts. The first thought has the two parts of wishing that all sentient beings have happiness and its cause. The second part similarly has the two parts of wishing that all sentient beings have freedom from unsatisfactoriness and its cause. The Five-Part teaching explains the development of enlightenment mind through the four immeasurable thoughts.

43. The three types of compassion are explained in the following paragraphs, though the explanations depend on implication. Compassion in relation to sentient beings is compassion that sees the suffering position of sentient beings in general. Compassion in relation to dharma is compassion that arises for those beings based on understanding various aspects of profound dharma other than emptiness, for example, understanding how they are caught in the process of interdependent arising.

Compassion in relation to non-referencing is compassion for sentient beings when they are seen through a mind that is not referencing them dualistically. The explanation in the text refers to it as compassion in relation to emptiness, which is saying the same thing. The first two compassions are referential, that is, they are compassion that is created in dualistic mind. The third is beyond that, it is compassion that is naturally present in non-dualistic wisdom.

44. This is a basic teaching the Buddha gave in the first turning of the wheel of dharma. It leads a person to understand that there is no personal self in anything. It does that by pointing out that “normal” people take things to be permanent, single, and independent, things whereas inspection shows that things are actually impermanent, composed of many parts, and arise as interdependent phenomena. Seeing this breaks down clinging to a self.

45. Emptiness is the basic character of mindness. The complexion of that emptiness is compassion. Complexion (Tib. mdangs) is sometimes translated as “radiance” but that is not the meaning. The phrase “basic character and its complexion” describes a basic thing and its complexion; like a polished wooden table and the shine that appears just at its surface.

46. A lineage supplication prayer popular in Drukpa Kagyu.

47. This does not mean “cannot be held any longer”, exactly. You must have the oral instructions in order to do this practice.

48. Tib. dmigs pa’i mtshan ma. “Conceptual tokens”. Dualistic mind works by using tokens to reference any object instead of referencing the object itself. These tokens are small, conceptual structures that are the operational stuff of dualistic mind’s perceptual process. They are used as the basis of the process of referencing which is the process in which dualistic mind references an actual object by using a conceptual token instead of the actual object. In other words, whenever an object is known in dualistic mind, it is always referenced with a concept that stands as a taken for the actual thing.

49. Glorious Archer is an epithet of the Indian Mahasiddha, Saraha. The first line of the quote here continues on directly to the two lines just below.

50. If the very thing that causes the fetters of sentient beings merely has the right method put together with it, then the fetters themselves become the way to release the fetters.

51. The self-purity of the afflictions is none other than the innate purity of mind, the mindness already mentioned.

52. You know the abiding state. Now, if thoughts move out from it, what is their nature?

53. The superficialities are the individual items experienced by the senses of a person in fictional reality. They are exaggerations, per the earlier note.

54. This sentence reflects the Tibetan exactly and the Tibetan is not straightforward. Padma Karpo here sums up what would take perhaps a whole book to explain. It is not crucial to the greater meaning of the book, so I will not attempt to explain it here.

55. Milarepa.

56. Emptiness and great bliss are in unification.

57. Admiring faith is one of three types of faith. Admiring faith is one in which one has a very clear appreciation of the qualities of the thing and so has faith in it for that reason.

58. It is not uncommon for a guru to make a comment to the people around him at the conclusion of some work, such as the completion of dictating of a text. These comments were sometimes preserved at the end of a text, as was done here.

59. Tib. rig pa'i mdangs cha.

60. Tib. gsal cha.

61. Tib. dpe'i ye shes.

62. Tib. don gyi ye shes.

Contents

Contents

Preface

Introduction

1. The Source of the Teaching

2. The Mahamudra Teaching

2.1. The Reality Called Mahamudra

2.2. The Practice of Mahamudra

2.3. The Specific Practice of Mahamudra Done in Five Parts

3. The Texts Presented Here

3.1. An Early Text From the Throphu Kagyu

3.2. A Text from the Drukpa Kagyu

— • • • — The Source: Gampopa's Instruction to Phagmo Drupa That Began the Five-part Mahamudra Teaching— • • • —

Excerpt from "The Questions of Phagmo Drupa And Replies of Gampopa"

— • • • — The Teaching: The Instructions of Phagmo Drupa as Transmitted by The Translator of Throphu, Jampay Pal— • • • —

A Written Instruction Coming from the Throphu Kagyu on the Five-Part Mahamudra

— • • • — The Teaching: The Instructions of Phagmo Drupa as Transmitted by All-Knowing Padma Karpo— • • • —

"Mind Harvest", An Instruction on Five-Part Mahamudra

I. The Explanation of the Goodness of the Beginning

A. Ordinary Procedures

B. Extraordinary Procedures

II. The Explanation of the Goodness of the Middle

A. The Points of Body

B. The Points of Speech

C. The Points of Mind

III. The Explanation of the Goodness of the End

Glossary

About Padma Karpo Translation Committee, The Author Tony Duff, And Supports for Study
Electronic Resources

Notes