

FIVE-PART MAHAMUDRA
BY
SITU CHOKYI JUNG NAY



BY TONY DUFF

Five-Part Mahamudra by Situ Chokyi Jungnay

The Five-Part Mahamudra with Elegant Commentary by Situ Chokyi
Jungnay



By Tony Duff

• Padma Karpo Translations •
Kindle Edition

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Preface

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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.

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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 eighth Situ Rinpoche of the Karma Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

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 C.E.] 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 Phagdru 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 the eighth Situ Rinpoche of the Karma Kagyu lineage.

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. The Main Text from the Karma Kagyu

The main text in this book was written many centuries after the text mentioned just above by the eighth Situ Rinpoche, Situ Chokyi Jungnay [1700–1744]. In general, the Situs are amongst the highest tulkus of the Karma Kagyu lineage. The eighth Situ was known for his exceptional knowledge and scholarship and was one of the key figures in a great revival of Buddhadharma that happened in Tibet in the 1700's. A feature of his writings is sheer brilliance of presentation.

His text on five-part Mahamudra is much longer than the one mentioned just above. The text begins with a presentation of the five parts and continues with a very clear presentation of the two types of enlightenment mind. Following that, the text makes clear distinctions between the two main practices of Mahamudra, shamatha and vipashyana, which are especially useful for anyone studying Mahamudra. This text is my favourite on this subject in many ways.

As a matter of interest, the text was written entirely in verse, but reads more as a continuous piece of prose, showing Situ Chokyi Jungnay's mastery over words and composition.

The current Situ Rinpoche gave Tony the transmission of Situ Chokyi Jungney's text on the subject, indicated his great pleasure that such a book was being produced, and clearly expressed his trust in Tony's knowledge and capabilities.

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
Situ Chokyi Jungnay**

—...—



Situ Chokyi Jungnay
The Eighth Tai Situ

A Written Instruction on Five-Part Mahamudra by All-Knowing Chokyi Jungnay

The innumerable plays of becoming and peace
Existing changelessly from the outset as Vajrasatva
Are the innate, self-settled, uncontrived guru.
I bow to that and having done so, write a foremost instruction of Mahāmudrā.

The preliminaries of training the enlightenment mind,
Meditating on the yidam deity and on the guru, and then
The main part, staying equipoised in Mahāmudrā, and
The conclusion of sealing with dedication all taken together are,
Because of being practised as a complete set in any given session,
Universally known as “Five-Part Mahāmudrā”.

The first of those, training the mind of enlightenment, is
Exactly the fictional arousing of mind⁽³¹⁾ which further is comprised of
Both aspiring and engaging, as in wanting to go and actually going.
The arousing of the aspiring mind is as follows.
Migrators in their entirety, none of whom have not been father and mother,
Want happiness but, not knowing the methods of happiness,
Do only degrading actions, so wander in saṃsāra. Understanding this, one
Always cultivates all-embracing loving kindness and compassion towards them, and
Aspires from the heart, “For their purposes, I myself will accomplish enlightenment”.
The arousing of the engaging mind is as follows.
The causes of buddhahood are the six or ten pāramitās which
Are included within the two accumulations like this: discipline
Is the accumulation of merit; prajñā the accumulation of wisdom;
And the concentration of śhamatha belongs to both.
The arousing of the engaging mind is one-pointed accomplishment of that
With the commitment, “I will accomplish them without laziness”.

Second is meditation on one’s body as the yidam deity.
Whether you have a particular, special deity or not does not matter;
Meditate on the Four-Armed Lokeśhvara and
Carry sights, sounds, and what is known onto the path
Via deity, mantra, and concentration, and abandon attachment to the ordinary.

Third, with yourself evident as the deity, visualise atop the crown of your head,
Seated on a lotus and moon, your root guru who is
Great Vajradhara, the embodiment of all the Jewels,

Surrounded by the Kagyu gurus.

Now when there is no guru, even the compassionate capabilities
Of the conquerors of the three times do not ripen the mindstreams of those to be tamed.
And, especially, the power of the conquerors stubs up against
The dregs of time when the beings have become totally wild but
The guru gets even these beings to produce just one virtuous frame of mind and,
From that start, by skilful means brings them incalculable benefit.
Therefore, your personal guru is equal to all the buddhas so
With an altruistic motivation, supplicate him one-pointedly.
Finally, take the empowerments of the three places, after which
The guru melts into light and sinks into you at which point
Think “His three vajras and my three doors have become inseparable”,
Then rest uncontrived, self-settled.

Fourth, the main part, meditation on Mahāmudrā, has
The two parts of what is to be understood and what is to be practised.
For the first: the nature of the dharmas of appearance-existence saṃsāra-nirvāṇa
Is the primordially complete purity, dharma dhatu—
Non-dual profundity and clarity, free of extremes, uncompounded.
It is called “original buddha” and
“Causal continuum” and “actuality Mahāmudrā” and
Is also very well known as “sugatagarbha”.
In this space-like expanse whose nature is complete purity,
Adventitious discursive thoughts stir and themselves produce
Grasping at self and mine—ignorance—and the rest of
Dependent relations forward order, the wheel of cyclic existence.
Its innate characteristic is introduced to you by the guru then,
If the root of cyclic existence, which is grasping at a self, and
Its root, which is discursive thought, are known,
There is a state of cessation like smoke left after extinguishing a fire, and
This meditation on emptiness come from the abandonment of discursive thought
Is the supreme path of emancipation. As for the methods of realizing it,
In mantra many are taught—development stage, training winds, blazing and dripping, and so on—
And in the sūtras innumerable ones are taught—śhamatha’s various referents which are determined
with vipaśhyānā, and so on—

But all of them are just that⁽³²⁾.

Why is that so? Because unless emptiness is realized, it is not possible
To cross over cyclic existence and become a buddha,

⁽³³⁾ “the dharmas taught by the conqueror are for ascertaining and settling upon emptiness” and
“The noble ones⁽³⁴⁾ meditate on emptiness and that higher meditation
That liberates them is that meaning”.⁽³⁵⁾

In regard to that sort of abandonment of discursive thought and meditation:
It is also thought of by some Tīrthikas as “non-concept, supreme self”
And they meditate well on that cognition;

And, saying that “it is the non-concept samādhi of Hwashang’s system”
It is a place where beginners’ śhamatha becomes stuck;
And, in later times, the ones who are very well known are mostly advocating
It as a meditation which is a string of discursive thought⁽³⁶⁾; and so on.
Putting such stained concentrations totally aside,
Instruction is given using an experiential kind of instruction, that is, via the
Lineage foremost instructions which are not mere ornaments to the word of the Conqueror,
Then the fortunate ones who are instructed that way
Gain the experience of unifying samādhi with prajñā
And this is what is accepted⁽³⁷⁾ as “sugatagarbha of the path” and
“Mindstream of method” and “truth of the path” and “wisdom accumulation”.

Further, “samādhi” is śhamatha that abides one-pointedly
In non-concept type of concentration.
Such freed of concepts, un-confused luminosity-mindness
Is the situation⁽³⁸⁾ for all dharmas because of which
The entirety of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa shines forth with the deep
Certainty of realizing it all as unborn and free from elaboration
And this is explained as the meaning of “vipaśhyanā” and “prajñā”.
When equipoised in these two, śhamatha and vipaśhyanā,
Since they are one entity, it is called “unification” and,
For as long as equipoise and post-attainment have not become intermingled,
There is post-attainment and in it, analytical prajñā is principal.

In sūtra, vipaśhyanā is termed knowing
And śhamatha is termed the leg;
If there is no knowing by the eye,
Then the legs do not know the pathway but,
If there were no legs, how could it be traversed?
Therefore, it⁽³⁹⁾ states, “having knowing and legs”.
By meditating like that, the clouds in the space-like dharmadhātu—
Which could have no stains occurring as part of its nature but
Which does have cloud-like adventitious stains of afflicted mind—
Are gradually cleared away, whereby all the classifications made
Of the ten bhūmis and five paths, and the divisions asserted by Śhāntipa
Of one-pointedness, freedom from elaboration, one taste, and non-meditation⁽⁴⁰⁾,
And so on are, together with the stains of karmic habits,
Finally exhausted, and at that point—which is called “complete buddhahood”,
The space-pervading dharmakāya has been manifested so,
Like the light of the sun, the two fruition form-kāyas
Of merit accumulation arise effortlessly,
And this is fully known in this teaching of the Conqueror as
“The fruition continuum” and “fruition buddha” and being
“Possessed of the two purities of sugatagarbha”.

Second, in the actual practice there are two methods of setting:
The method of setting the body is putting it together with the seven dharmas of Vairochana.
The method of setting the mind is that the assemblies of past and
Future discursive thoughts are not followed or invited and
The present awareness is identified with the unwavering stare then,
(41), you set yourself into relaxation on top of that.
If thoughts are elaborated, the elaborator is identified;
Not stopping or producing, abandoning or taking up, relax in that state.
If a one-pointedness is not obtained,
Hold the mind by focussing on whichever support you prefer—
A piece of wood, a small object, a deity's form, a seed-syllable, and so on—
And when, through gradual habituation to that, the mind has steadied a little,
Do short sessions many times and, at the time of the session,
At first, all of the consciousnesses of the six-fold group⁽⁴²⁾
Should be rounded up into one via one-pointed mindfulness then
Immediately, like cutting the rope around a stook of straw,
And other than just relaxing without distraction,
Every focal point of thought concerned with the idea that this is the meditation to do,
Such as “There is / is not / exists / does not exist this to meditate on and this meditation”,
And “bliss, clarity, and no-thought”, “emptiness”, and so on should be abandoned.
In the end, a mindfulness like a crow flying at its target,
A mindfulness which merely does not lose its stance,
Becomes rigpa that does what it pleases without grasping a self.
Due to that, the appearing objects of the six-fold group and
Discursive thinking about sickness and afflictions
Are made into the object of the meditation then mixed with it, and that is the meditation.
Those things cause a non-wandering samādhi to grow.
In short, at the time of śhamatha concentration meditation,
If you relax too much, it will turn to sinking, and
If you tighten stringently, it will become agitated and the awareness will not stay in freshness.
Consideration of the faults and virtues of tightening upsets the mind—
It falls under the control of doubt and one-pointedness is not attained—
So with delight and certainty, meditate in balanced relaxation and tightening.
No matter which experience of bliss, clarity, or emptiness dawns,
If you become attached to it, you will deviate into cyclic existence, so, while not clinging,
And without suppressing or producing, preserve an ongoing recognition of oneself.

Then, the introduction to vipaśhyanā is given as follows.
Guardian Maitreya said in *The Ornament of the Sūtra Section*,
“Understand with rational mind that there is nothing other than mind;
Then comprehend that that mind is emptiness;
Then with rational mind understand that both do not exist; then
Without it, know the presence of dharmadhātu.⁽⁴³⁾”
Determine it accordingly by the three of scripture, reasoning,

And valid experience as follows.

First, all appearances, the shifting events of thoughts,

Do not exist as anything other than mind alone;

For example, they should be known as the objects of a dream.

If you think, “How, from unimpeded mind, are these impeding things

With attributes of hardness, wetness, warmth, and so on produced?” then

There is the story of the cowherd who meditated on a goat on his crown

And ended up manifesting through mind and mantra a naga sprouting from the top of his head;

Given that a stable development stage can bring the accomplishment

Even in one lifetime of the sight of the yidam deity, and so on, then

Why couldn't there be the production of such things, given

Our familiarization with bad karmic habits since beginningless time?

In one cup of water, the devas see nectar,

Where the pretas see pus and blood, and

The beings who live in the ground see a good home

Where humans see ordinary earth and stones, and so on,

Which is a sign that such is only an appearance of mind with no truth to it.

When in that way you have made certain that apparent objects are mind,

You must know that the mind also is emptiness.

Mind has not so much as an atom's worth of existence to it.

Why? At the time of appearances conditioned by objects of clinging

They are just known, just flicker on and off, arising and ceasing by the instant.

Further, if the individual items of the eight-fold group of consciousness

Are, each one, cut at the base, the root is destroyed.

The so-called “ālaya” is nothing other than a name.

For example, just as a mirage has no water in it but

Thirsty animals, confusing it for water, chase after it,

So this extreme liar of a mind that grasps to a self then

Accumulates bad karmas is more than very confused!

Therefore, the Conqueror, in the sūtra section basket,

Clearly said, “Do not involve your mind with mind!”

If you become without mind, then there is its nature,

Which he said, “is luminosity” which clung to is

So-called “mind”, the eight-fold group of consciousness,

And their nature is confusion, a discursive thought.

Mind's nature called “luminosity”

Is non-thought, not-confused self-knowing wisdom.

That is not obtained by meditation that newly creates something,

Nor is it bestowed by the compassionate activity of the conquerors;

Rather, the lineage of the causal mindstream has been beginninglessly present as your nature and

It is your accumulation of the accumulations, purification of the obscurations, and force of meditation

Combined with the introduction to it made by the blessings of a realized guru

That makes you see what you have.

Therefore, it was said, “Co-emergence⁽⁴⁴⁾, that which is not expressed by another,

Is not something that can be found anywhere;

Rather, it has to be known through reliance on the glorious guru's method of time
And through one's own merit.⁽⁴⁵⁾

That kind of co-emergence, your nature freed from both
The object grasped at and the mind that does the grasping,
Which is pure like space and does not fall into sides that have been set up,
A unification of śhamatha and vipaśhyānā seeing freedom from elaboration,
“Will, if you can stay in equipoise on it for even one moment,
Defeat the darkness accumulated during a kalpa” it was said⁽⁴⁶⁾.
That sort of Mahāmudrā with the view of freedom from elaboration
Is the heart of the view of both sūtra and tantra.

Āchārya Nāgārjuna and others state that “there is no view higher than Madhyamaka”
But the *Lamp of the Modes* states, “same meaning” meaning that the views are the same in
meaning⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Therefore, if you take hundreds of unsurpassed tantra's⁽⁴⁸⁾
Four empowerments and are empowering others with them,
Since the meaning of the fourth empowerment is Mahāmudrā
What need is there to raise the issue of your own practice of it?
If just the name is heard, the ears are covered, so what
Difference is there from the activities of the governor of the desire realm?⁽⁴⁹⁾
When meditating on that sort of yoga of unification,
If you start to cling to⁽⁵⁰⁾ bliss, clarity, and no-thought, then
You deviate into the desire, form, and formless realms⁽⁵¹⁾
So it has to be preserved via a non-clinging, non-stopping coming forth of itself⁽⁵¹⁾
Furthermore, discarding all rationally produced tenet systems of sophistry—
The conceit that just intellectual understanding is sufficient;
Referencing emptiness after the collapse of appearances;
Becoming afraid like when peering over the edge of a precipice,
When there is a small cessation of discursive thought;
Seeing it as faulty whenever discursive thought arises; and so on—
You then practise with diligence according to the system
Of the oral instructions of practice adorned with experience:
The state is preserved by allowing whatever arises to arise and not constructing anything within self-
settling;
No distraction and no meditation; rest relaxed; and so on.
At that time, wisdom shines forth from the heart and exaggerations are cut.
Without your wanting them, the signs of the path and good qualities will increase.
Like mercury spilled on the ground, drops of the eight dharmas⁽⁵³⁾
Will not mingle with your practice; you will find all of the
Enjoyable pastimes of cyclic existence distasteful as poison.
Understanding that emptiness and dependent relationship must be unified,
If upāya and prajñā are brought together and the two purposes are spontaneously accomplished,
Then “virtuous practices have gone to the point”, as is said.
In that way, the three preliminaries accumulate merit and

The main part accumulates wisdom so the two accumulations’
Fruition, the two or three kāyas, are gained.
Further, the point when the two luminosities of ground and path mix,
Which is known as “the meeting of mother and son”,
Is called “complete buddhahood” and at that time:
The essence empty, dharmakāya,
The nature luminosity, sambhogakāya, and
The liveliness appearing without stoppage, the universal nirmāṇakāyas, are
The totally complete, mahāsukhakāya.
The primordial actuality that is the nature of the four kāyas,
Is the self-recognized, supreme fruition because of which
It was said to be “the fruition divorced from hope and fear”.

Fifth, at the conclusion, sealing with dedication.
The lines, “In the maṇḍala of self-knowing sugatagarbha,
The virtue accumulated of the two accumulations” are saying
“All the virtue as much as there is in the three times”.
Then, in the state that holds to the view of emptiness
Which does not reference the threefold sphere of
Action, actor, and object of dedication now drawn together as one,
Dedicate one-pointedly so that yourself and others, all migrators,
Become quickly released from this cage of cyclic existence,
So that they may attain the rank of the Mahāmudrā of unified co-emergent wisdom.
Further, no matter how vast the merit that has been accumulated,
If the dedication is not held within the view of overall purity of the threefold sphere, then,
As the Conqueror said in the Prajñāpāramitā and other sūtras,
It will be like a feeble person without eyes and
Like eating food mixed with poison.
Thus, so that you do not veer from making it into a faultless cause of emancipation,
Take care at all times,
No matter which virtuous practice of development and completion yogas you do,
To make an effort to plant seeds of enlightenment!

In that way within one session five branches
Are practised as a set, though for beginners
When doing the main part—holding the mind and so on—
And the meditation and familiarization is going well,
It is not necessary to shift to another practice from the unification yoga.

Then, as an adjunct to that, the practice can be connected to the time of day.
At dawn, there is “the yoga of making wisdom clear”:
Immediately on waking, without letting discursive thoughts
Get in the way, identify the rigpa of unified luminosity-emptiness
And rest in equipoise on the innate character.
Meditate on strong compassion for

All of the migrators who have not realized it, then begin your virtuous practice.
That grooms the meditation and provides a good start.
It is the foremost instruction for getting into the system of virtuous practice.

When day arrives, there is the yoga of sealing appearances;
It is a foremost instruction connected with purifying the confusion of appearances in their entirety.

At dusk, there is the yoga of carrying desirables as assistants⁽⁵⁴⁾:
Not being overly attached to food, drink, clothes, bedding, and so on
But remaining in the state that knows them as empty,
Train in them as dharmatā itself sinking into itself.
If you are incapable of that level, then train in them
As possessions that are offered to the deity and guru.
It is the foremost instruction for completing the accumulations without being bound by desirables.

In the early night, there is the yoga of gathering the sense faculties into the ground:
In order to prevent whatever confused thoughts shone forth during the day
From continuing further, stare unwaveringly at their essence.
It is the foremost instruction of remaining within virtuous practice at night.

At midnight, there is the yoga of inserting consciousness into the vase:
Supplicate the heart maṇḍala⁽⁵⁵⁾ without meditating on it;
Sever discursive thoughts and go to sleep in equipoise
On dharmatā free of elaborations.
That, at this time and the time of death,
Is the oral instruction for mixing mother and son luminosities.
At the point of death, the person who performs the yoga of wisdom transparency
Severs the clinging of attachment to all things,
Lays aside every wrong-doing and downfall of this and all other lives,
And, having brought to mind every virtue of self and others,
Rejoices in them and dedicates the merit to the great enlightenment.
Especially, if you can manage it, the body should be made into an offering.
Having decided that your own mind has no birth or death,
Cast off the dissolution stages, and so on, as you can and,
Not engaging in many different visualizations,
Equipoise yourself in the greater mudrā, self-settled
Without an atom of meditation or non-meditation
And transfer to the expanse of the transparency dharmakāya.
That, which closes the doors to the bad states of the bad migrations
And eliminates the confused taking hold of
Cyclic existence in general and especially the intermediate state,
Is the foremost instruction for realizing death as the dharmakāya.

*The small instruction on the Five-Part Mahāmudrā,
A work not so large, was composed after the*

*The Great Sawang of Derge's personal advisor,
Drepo Chosong Lodro, pressed for it verbally.
The author, who wrote down whatever came to mind
In an outpouring of unrestrained blather,
Is named Tsuglag Chokyi Jungnay.*

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 note 43.

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. Superficies 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⁽⁵⁸⁾; 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⁽⁵⁹⁾ 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 off 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. Phagdru 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. Introduction has the meaning of introduction as described in note 10. Dharmatā in this case is not very technical, it is a way of saying “reality”.

13. 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.

14. 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.

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

16. The second of the five parts.

17. The third of the five parts.

18. 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.

19. Of the Kagyu lineage.

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

21. 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.

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

23. Of the deity’s mantra.

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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”.

27. 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.

28. 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.

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. There are two trainings in enlightenment mind corresponding to the two levels of reality, fictional and superfactual, which were discussed in an earlier note.

32. They are methods for realizing emptiness.

33. By the Buddha ...
34. Skt. ārya, Tib. 'phags pa. “Noble One” in Buddhism has a special meaning. It does not mean just anyone who is a good or fine person. It specifically refers to those who are superior to ordinary beings still wandering in cyclic existence because, having seen emptiness directly, they have left cyclic existence. They are the noble ones and the ordinary beings are the commoners, is how it is usually described.
35. In other words, the Buddha said that his teachings were given so that others could seek and arrive at the meaning of emptiness and that the higher type of meditation of his followers who had achieved the rank of a noble one, a meditation which brought about their liberation, was a meditation on the fact of emptiness.
36. He is referring to the Gelugpa school which is criticized by the Kagyus and Nyingmas for mistaking an endless string of analytical minds (and which can be pejoratively referred to as a string of discursive thoughts) for actual direct insight into emptiness.
37. Tib. bzhes pa. “Accepted” specifically means the way that the masters of the lineage have decided upon it and assert it to others, they being the ones who are in a position to make such declarations that such and such is this way or that.
38. Just as we would say, “the situation in the world today is” so here it is saying that “the situation that all dharmas now find themselves in is ...”
39. In the sūtras.
40. The Indian master Śhantipa formulated the four yogas of Mahāmudrā as a sequence of stages of the practice, and that is being referred to here.
41. Tib. bzos bcos. A pair of terms that work together to give the full meaning of leaving something just as it is. The first term of the pair, “construction”, means to create something new that was not already there. The second, “alteration”, means to make a modification to something that is already there. Altogether it means neither to create something newly nor to alter what is already there, in other words to leave the situation just as it is, untouched, unmodified.
42. Tib. tshogs drug. “Tshogs” means a group, a single collection. “Tshogs drug” means the six different consciousnesses, taken as a group, of beings in this human realm; the six-fold group. This has been translated as “six collections of consciousness” but that is incorrect. There is a second description of the consciousnesses given by the Buddha in which he explains eight consciousnesses, and these taken as one group are correspondingly called “the eight-fold group”.
43. These four steps to the realization of reality through non-dual mind are very well known. The first three are rational and hence dualistic approaches, the last is non-dual.
44. Co-emergence is the name for reality according to the Sahajayoga (Co-emergence Yoga) system of Mahāmudrā that came down through Saraha.
45. A verse from the *Hevajra Tantra* which is commonly quoted throughout the Kagyu schools. You will see it mentioned in the other texts, too.

46. By Tailopa.

47. Those expounding the sūtras say that the Middle Way—Madhyamaka—is the highest view, but when the matter is carefully examined, that view and the view of Mahāmudrā are not different, as mentioned in a number of tantric texts, such as the well-known *Lamp of the Modes*.

48. Unsurpassed Yogatantra.

49. The person bestowing the empowerment, which is none other than Mahāmudrā, must be able, through his own practice of it, to make the actual meaning dawn in the minds of the disciples requesting the empowerment. If people hear the fancy-sounding name “Mahāmudrā” but do not have the experience of it dawn in their minds, then they might as well have had their ears covered. And if their ears were covered and they were did not hear the instructions that would open their minds to Mahāmudrā, then what difference would there be between their activity in taking the empowerment and their normal activities, driven by dualistic mind, given that dualistic mind is the governor who creates and maintains this desire realm they live in?

50. The experiences of ...

51. Each of the three temporary experiences creates a possibility of birth in a corresponding place. The three places respectively correspond to the deviations as listed.

52. The only way to nurture the state of unification is to not try to make it into something. Trying to make it into something happens through one style of clinging or another. Thus here, one nurtures by letting go of clinging and allowing it to come forth of itself. Stoppages is a technical term of non-dual meditation. It refers to leaving the continuous flow of the state of unification—stopping off—and thereby getting stuck in this or that extreme. The point is to stay in the state of unification continuously and the one thing that you can do in order to do that is not to stop off into concepts, that is, non-unification. For example, if you cling to one of the three main experiences in meditation, you stop off in the dualistic experience corresponding to it and hence lose the continuity of the unification, the non-duality.

53. Mercury that has been spilled breaks into little droplets that do not mix with anything. Let the poisonous little bits of the eight worldly dharmas scatter and not mix in with your practice.

54. Carrying desirables onto the path as assistants.

55. The maṇḍala of the heart chakra, which is the home of luminosity.

56. Tib. rig pa'i mdangs cha.

57. Tib. gsal cha.

58. Tib. dpe'i ye shes.

59. Tib. don gyi ye shes.

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