



————— Mahāmudrā —————
Pointing Out the Dharmakāya

A Manual of Instruction on the Union of Connate Mahāmudrā
by the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje

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Mahāmudrā, Pointing Out the Dharmakāya

A Manual of Instruction on the Union of Connate Mahāmudrā;
The Torch that Illuminates the Heart Essence;
The Innermost Nectar Essence.



by the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje

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Translator's Foreword

The present text, *Mahāmudrā, Pointing out the Dharmakāya*,¹ by the ninth holder of the black vajra crown, Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje [1556-1603], is among the profoundest teachings which the practice lineage of the Karma Kamtsang has to offer. It is designed as a practice manual for practitioners to take on a secluded retreat to apply these instructions and gain hands-on experience through personal practice. This is a text that needs to be practised, not just studied or read casually.

As a matter of fact, if you do not intend to really practice these instructions, you should not even have this text. As the author, the Karmapa, points out in one of the closing chapters, merely toying with these teachings will only result in a dry intellectual

1. The Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje [*dbang phyug rdo rje*, 1556-1603] authored three famous treatises on Mahāmudrā practice: the extensive *Mahāmudrā, The Ocean of Definitive Meaning* [*phyag chen nges don rgya mtsho*]; the medium length *Mahāmudrā, Dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance* [*phyag chen ma rig mun sel*]; and the present *Mahāmudrā, Pointing out the Dharmakāya* [*phyag chen chos sku mdzub tshugs*], which is the most concise of the three, mostly intended as a practice manual for use in retreat and similar settings.

understanding that will eventually become a major obstacle to actual experience.

This text is based on two longer versions by the same author, which explain the origins, definitions and practices of Mahāmudrā in much greater detail. The longer of these two works, *Mahāmudrā, The Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, has been translated brilliantly into English by Elisabeth M. Callahan under the auspices of Nitartha International several years ago. It would be considered essential reading before attempting to put these instructions into practice.

Even so, it is absolutely necessary to have received these teachings from an authentic lineage master. Therefore, do not attempt to do this on your own! Proper transmission, explanation, and eventually pointing-out instruction by a realised master are absolutely essential. Equally important and a point all too easily ignored is that the preliminary practices need to be trained in and completed thoroughly. Without a solid foundation, you cannot even begin to hope to understand these teachings, let alone gain experience and realisation through their application. So, do this right from the beginning, and you might achieve the “Unified State of Vajradhara” in this very lifetime. Trying to cut corners and get ahead of yourself will only waste precious time and not get you anywhere.

Another point I'd like to impress upon the reader concerns the occasionally obscure terminology. When a Tibetan author, such as the present one, chooses to be obscure, it is for a good reason, and it cannot be a translator's task to clarify matters in his or her translation. It is exactly this "intentional obscurity" that allows for transmission to happen in the first place, because the student will thus be obliged to go, book in hand or not, into the presence of a teacher to request clarification. A point often not appreciated by younger generation translators who, sadly, more often than not, lack the experience of actual practice. It is precisely this circumstance that allows a teacher to gauge the student's understanding and insight and to provide clarification or further instruction before sending him or her to do more practice.

And then, finally, there is the point of certain terminology that can only be inadequately described as "experiential." Even in the original Tibetan, these terms attempt to convey, poorly, as any Tibetan master will readily admit, a sense of experience that will forever remain indescribable in accurate words. This is not the domain of scholars. As we move into ever more profound and subtle realms of recognising the very nature of reality itself, how can we expect to be able to put into words what even the Buddhas could not describe?

Sherab Drime [Thomas Roth]



(72)² OM SVASTI SIDDHĪ HŪṀ

I go for refuge³ to and prostrate myself at the feet of the glorious Lama, the source of all qualities of meditative experience and insight, inseparable from the all-encompassing Lord Vajradhara. I pray, grant your blessings!

Here is the heart essence of all buddhas of the three times, the instruction that has been passed down from Vajradhara to Könchok Yenlag,⁴ from ear to ear, in an unbroken lineage; from which the warmth of blessings and the breath of the *ḍākinīs* has not yet dissipated; the means through which the unified state

2. These page numbers in round brackets, correspond to the *gdams ngag mdzod* edition of this text.

3. Though everyone is used to the term “refuge”, a better and certainly more literal translation of the Tibetan *skyabs su 'gro* would perhaps be “to place oneself under the protection of...”

4. The Fifth Shamarpa, Könchok Yenlak [*dkon mchog yan lag*, 1525-1583]. He was one of the principal students and the lineage holder of the previous Eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje [*mi bskyod rdo rje*, 1507-1554]. He passed on the transmission of the lineage entrusted to him to the Ninth Karmapa, thus becoming one of his main teachers, who in turn passed all teachings, empowerments and transmissions of the Kamtsang Kagyu tradition on to the famous Sixth Shamarpa, Garwang Chökyi Wangchuk [*gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug*, 1584-1630].

of Vajradhara may be achieved in one lifetime and one body; known as “the Union of Connate Mahāmudrā” of the precious Kagyupas. It is to be put into practice in three stages:

1. The preliminaries
2. The main body of the practice
3. The conclusion

1. The Preliminaries



- 1.1. The common preliminaries
- 1.2. The uncommon preliminaries
- 1.3. The special preliminaries

1.1. The Common Preliminaries

- 1.1.1. Reflecting on the freedoms and riches which are difficult to find
- 1.1.2. Reflecting on death and impermanence
- 1.1.3. Reflecting on [the law of] cause and effect (73)
- 1.1.4. Reflecting on the shortcomings of *saṃsāra*

[First session]

1.1.1. Reflecting on the freedoms and riches which are difficult to find

If one were to pour lion's milk into an ordinary container, this container would break, and the milk would be lost. Similarly, if you want to put truly perfect Dharma into practice, you need an excellent vessel or basis. The most sublime among these bases is the precious human body, endowed with the freedoms and riches.⁵ The fact that you presently possess such a precious human body is indeed a great fortune. It is due to your having

5. This refers to the so-called eighteen freedoms and riches. Through these, a precious human body is different from an ordinary human body. The [*chos mngon pa kun las btus pa, Abhidharmasamuccaya*] or *Compendium of the Abhidharma* by Asaṅga describes them as follows:

A rebirth in the hell realms, as hungry ghost or as an animal, as barbarian or as a long-lived god, with wrong views, in a time without a Buddha, or with severe mental afflictions — these are the eight types of unfree existence.

The ten riches are subdivided into five which depend upon ourselves:

To be human, to be born in a central country, to be endowed with all senses, to be free of extreme deeds, and to have trust in the right objects.

And five which depend on outer circumstances:

A Buddha has appeared in this world, he has taught the Dharma, these teachings are still extant, these teachings are still being practiced, and there are beings who lovingly guide others.

This quotation is found in the Ninth Karmapa's extensive treatise, the *Mahāmudrā, The Ocean of Definitive Meaning* [*phyag chen nges don rgya mtsho*].

previously amassed the accumulations, to your having avoided the ten unvirtuous deeds at the cost of your life, to your having adopted the ten virtuous deeds willingly, and to your having accumulated immeasurable merit.

It is, however, not the case that one finds such a body simply by fortunate circumstances or even by accident, without any cause. Therefore, as far as its causes are concerned, it is difficult to find.

Isn't it extremely unlikely that a pea, thrown against a mud wall, will actually grow there? Likewise, isn't it extremely unlikely that a tortoise⁶ that lives in the great ocean and surfaces once every hundred years will stick its head through a wooden yoke that is tossed about on that ocean? It is equally unlikely that you will find a Uḍumbāra (74) flower. Just as these analogies are extremely rare, it is equally rare to find [such a body].

The [size or amount of the] three lower realms equals roughly the number of atoms of this great earth. The [amount of those] possessing an [ordinary] human body is roughly equivalent to the number of atoms [that fit] onto a fingernail. [Compared to that], those with a precious human body, endowed with the freedom and riches, are equivalent to a single atom. Regarding that, negative behaviour [in beings] is strong, whereas positive

6. That tortoise is often even described as being blind!

behaviour is weak. Therefore, the number of those born in the lower realms is great. At the same time, the number of those born in the higher realms, having a human body which enables them to behave positively, is exceedingly small. Also, with respect to such numbers, it is difficult to find.

“A body like this, as I presently find it, is indeed difficult to obtain and highly impermanent. Should it come to pass that I will leave this human existence empty-handed,⁷ I will very likely experience a negative future rebirth in the lower realms, like being thrown into a hole with no way to escape from it.” Thinking in this way, you will, with fierce endeavour, hit the key point of positive practice, without being distracted even for a single moment. Therefore, to the best of your ability, integrate this resolve into your mindstream, thinking, “I will definitely be someone who will enter upon the path!” and transform your attitude into Dharma.

That was the first session.

7. This may seem odd because one will definitely leave this life empty-handed. It refers to dying without having used one’s human existence for the practice of Dharma.

[Second session]

1.1.2. Reflecting on death and impermanence

Not meditating on impermanence, your mind will not turn away from the cycle of existence. Not turning away, you will be unable to abandon the eight worldly concerns.⁸ You will therefore not be liberated from the cycle of existences and special meditation experiences, and insights will not occur. The following meditation about impermanence is an antidote against these points:

The way this outer world as a vessel at first arises, how it abides in between, and how it ceases [to be] in the end, without even the smallest part remaining. Also, earlier and later times, mornings, afternoons, noon, night, etc., none of these lasts even for a single instant. In the same way are the seasons of winter, spring, summer and autumn, subject to change and impermanence. For this reason, all compounded phenomena never go beyond the self-nature of impermanence and change.

Similarly, beings as the inner content [of this world], infants, small children, juveniles, the elderly and the infirm, none of them will in the end escape dying. The moment of death itself

8. Tib. *'jig rten chos brygad*, the eight worldly dharmas or concerns: gain and loss, fame and disgrace, praise and blame, pleasure and pain.

is unsure (75). There is not even a guarantee that you will not die today or tomorrow. Among those who presently enjoy life are many who, through planetary influences, poisons, weapons, fire, water, an abyss, etc., will suddenly, when their time has come, become a corpse. Even though life usually lasts a long time, it rarely exceeds 100 years. Those for whom a third of their lifetime has already passed are only approaching death.

So many of our previous Lamas, masters, close friends and companions, relatives, associates, etc., have died suddenly in this way or have suffered long from a disease. Even while they suffered fears and unimaginable diseases, pains and suffering, there was nothing to be done, no method of ransoming, and in this way they went through the process of dying. After their passing, we had no means of meeting them again, and it is unsure whither they went. Just like a stone tossed into water, they could not avoid being separated [from us] and have since disappeared. A corpse will be brought to a charnel ground and scattered there, never to rise again. Whither mind went, and as what it was reborn, we do not know.

Think: “Since I myself cannot avoid such, what is there to be done? If I were dying right now, how would that be? Are not all endeavours with the concerns of this life utterly crazy?” That would be like an animal that summons its own slaugh-

terer. If you would prepare now for a long stay [in this life], if you would [embrace] the eight worldly concerns, if you would allow yourself to be non-virtuous and indifferent, there could be no greater suffering than this. So, think again: “What are all the endeavours of this life? Cast them away! I must practise for the benefit of the next life!” In such a state, with your whole body shivering with fear, but with an undistracted mind, merge with your mindstream the resolve to use this human lifetime for practice to the best of your ability, and give rise to a corresponding attitude.

For all these reasons, meditation on death and impermanence is so important in the beginning. Think of those who have died. Also, you cannot avoid it yourself. Therefore, when dying (76), you have no power whatsoever over your possessions or fame. It all stays behind and is useless. The only thing that is of any benefit at such a time is the Dharma. At the beginning, this meditation is important because it becomes the cause of your concerning yourself with the Dharma. In between, it is important because it [shows you] the uncertainty of the moment of death and how you have no time to lean back and take things easy. In the end, it is important because it makes you understand that [the process of] dying is clear light, the *Dharmakāya*. The self-nature of dying is absolute truth, free of any mental con-

structs. Therefore, apply yourself earnestly to the meditation about these [points].

That was the second session.

[Third session]

1.1.3. Reflecting on cause and effect

Now then, if according to the [nihilist] Cārvāka⁹ tradition, you would become a [mere] nothing after death, like the extinguishing of a butter lamp; or if you could decide [for yourself] where to be reborn next, then one could simply leave things as they are. However, this is not the case. Rather, depending on whatever deeds you have done, you will be reborn accordingly. If you have accumulated deeds which were mainly motivated by hatred against sacred objects,¹⁰ and if you have performed the ten unvirtuous deeds extensively and often, then you will be reborn as a hell being. If you have accumulated deeds which were mainly motivated by desire, and if you have performed the ten unvirtuous deeds occasionally and with middling intensity, then you will be reborn as a hungry ghost. If you have mainly accumulated deeds under the influence of stupidity, and if you have performed the ten unvirtuous deeds rarely and with low intensity, then you will be reborn as an animal. If you have performed great, middling or lesser defiled virtue, you will be reborn as a god, demi-god or human.

9. Tib. *'phen pa'i lugs*

10. Tib. *yul gnyen po*, should read *yul gnyan po*: so, not “objects which are a remedy” but “sacred objects”.

In this way, all deeds that you have performed yourself do not just dissolve into the unknown, but stay with you. Just like the drawing of a straight line, you will experience [their results] unerringly. Therefore, examine your three doors constantly and give rise to the appreciation for positive (77) [deeds]. In order not to lose [the results of positive deeds], seal them with absolutely pure dedication for the sake of beings. It is important that you regret and confess unvirtuous deeds in the proper way, and to take vows and commitments upon yourself. Do not allow your vows and commitments to be damaged even for a single day; strive to restore them fully. Eradicating emotional defilements and obscurations, whenever they occur, gives rise to the resolve: “I will definitely not be overwhelmed by them!” Without fail, practice accepting positive and rejecting negative [deeds].

That was the third session.

[Fourth session]

1.1.4. Reflecting on the shortcomings of samsāra

If, according to the results mentioned above — of negative or positive deeds respectively — one were eventually to be born in the lower realms, there are [at first] the eighteen hells: the eight hot hells, the eight cold hells, and two more [called] the lesser and the neighbouring [hells]. In each and every one of them, the unbearable suffering [experienced there] is hard to fathom. [In these hells] there is suffering exclusively, and not a single instant of happiness. [How is it] to be born in the eight hot hells? If you now burn your lips with some hot soup, how unbearably hot that is already! If you were to experience something as inconceivable as all your innards being consumed by boiling liquid iron, and you yourself being cooked in copper cauldrons, how would that be? Even when you hurt yourself with a mere thorn, you already suffer many pains. How would it then be if blazing axes and saws would hack and cut your body to pieces?

Even if your clothes are only slightly thin, you already suffer greatly from the cold. When being born in the cold hells, you experience inconceivable suffering. You are stuck in a crevice

of ice, without any clothes, buffeted by insufferably [cold] winds, and your body splits into pieces. Such is the suffering there.

[What does it mean] to be born as a hungry ghost? If already now, you are unable to suffer the circumstance of not tasting food for a single day, then you will suffer all the more in such a rebirth, because for 500 years, during which a month of the human realm counts as a day, you will not find anything to eat, not a single drop of water, not a single scrap of food. Even if you should find something to eat, you will be unable to get it down your throat, and your stomach will not be able to digest it. Your innards would feel as if consumed by a raging fire (78).

As to the animals, some live in the depths of the outer oceans, and others, which live on the surface [of the earth], in the lands of gods and humans. They do, in turn, devour each other, carry unbearable loads, plough [fields], without any control over their destinies, are being castrated, their noses are being pierced, and they get slaughtered, etc. All animals, like larger or smaller birds that fly about in the skies, or deer that roam the earth, etc., see all those that see them, like humans, etc., as butchers that dig their hands into their stomachs, and are thus [at all times] afraid of being killed. This kind of suffering is likened to our present human bodies being pierced by 500 lances. So, all those born in this way suffer like this.

The suffering of dying and transmigration among the gods: their mental suffering is greater than the hundred thousand-fold [suffering] of the hells. It is like that of a fish [writhing] on hot sand.

Because of fighting and strife, the demi-gods experience themselves as embittered, their bodies are wounded, etc. Their sufferings resemble the ones mentioned above.

The suffering of birth among humans: while in one's mother's womb, when her stomach is full, one suffers as if one were squashed by a mountain. If she is hungry, [one suffers] as if hanging from a ledge. If she has eaten hot food, [one suffers] as if boiled in hot water. If she has eaten cold food, [one suffers] as if trapped in an ice crevice. While being born, you suffer as if you are being crushed between two great mountains. When falling to the ground, you suffer as if falling into a pit of thorns; when being cut from the placenta,¹¹ you suffer as if your skin is peeled off.

Then, after having eventually grown old, you suffer from losing your teeth, from your head growing grey, from your eyesight failing, from your ears growing deaf, and from your back being bent. Rising feels like being dragged up; sitting down feels like falling down. Your legs do not carry your body anymore, and you

11. Tib. *phru ma bshus*.

are being mistreated by everyone, etc. When, among sicknesses, even a mere toothache is already unbearable for you, what is there to say about other [sicknesses]?

What's more, also dying is suffering. You lie upon your death-bed, eat your last food, and are surrounded by your relatives and [barely] manage to utter your last words. According to the dissolution processes, you imagine that your body falls beneath the earth (79). While your breath escapes again and again from your nose and mouth, it just does not return, but breaks off in a rattle, and you are at a complete loss about what to do. You experience immeasurable fear, but there are no more ways to [cheat death].

On top of all that, you suffer from being unable to protect that which you possess; from being unable to find that which you do not possess; from your fear of meeting with enemies and being separated from friends; from the fear of your sons not standing by you; from the fear of being unable to get your daughters married; from the fear of your good reputation with your friends and neighbours being damaged, etc.

Because that is truly so, [it should be clear that] all the wealth and happiness within the cycle of existences is useless, even if you were to attain the state of Brahmā, Īśvara or that of a Cakra-vartin. To give an example: a person who has been thrown into

a dungeon has not the slightest desire to remain there even for an instant, but thinks of nothing else but escape. Such a person has no attachment [to this prison] whatsoever and thinks only: “When will I be free?” Accordingly, give rise to the resolve and wholly pure attitude of renunciation by way of thinking: “I will strive to do whatever I can to break free of this cycle of existences, which is nothing but suffering, devoid of even a single instant of happiness, as if I were struggling to free myself out of a fire pit, a dungeon or a swamp of rotten vomit. I would rather perish than concern myself with the eight worldly concerns or strive for the happiness and wealth of saṃsāra!”

That was the fourth session.

These were the four common preliminaries.

1.2. The Uncommon Preliminaries

The uncommon preliminaries in four points:

- 1.2.1. How one's stream of mind becomes an appropriate vessel and how all activity becomes a means on the path to liberation, the explanation of the going for refuge, and the giving rise to the enlightened attitude.
- 1.2.2. The meditation and repetition of Vajrasattva, which purifies negativity and obscurations.
- 1.2.3. The explanation of [offering of] maṇḍalas, which bring about the two accumulations.
- 1.2.4. The Guru Yoga, which swiftly brings about blessings.

[Fifth session]

1.2.1. The explanation of the going for refuge, and the giving rise to the enlightened attitude

First, what is the method for freeing oneself from the sufferings of saṃsāra, and what can be a protection from these? Such objects [of refuge] are the three precious ones. Relying on these, take the Buddha as the teacher, the Dharma as the path, and the Sangha as the virtuous friends upon that path, and then traverse that path [yourself]. Ultimately, (80) only the Buddha can be [our] protection. However, because these are all embodied in the root lama, request refuge from him.

After having gone for refuge, you must give rise to the attitude which aims at unsurpassable enlightenment for the welfare of beings. Then you must strive to achieve perfect buddhahood. Concerning that, know that all beings have been your parents. Remember their kindness and think about how to repay them. In order to establish them in the state of buddhahood, give rise to the [corresponding] attitude and think: “Just like all previous buddhas and bodhisattvas have given rise to the enlightened attitude and made aspiration prayers, in that very same way I will train myself.”

To [describe] the meditation briefly to illustrate how the precious ones are of one being but appear as five, clearly imagine the following:

In the centre of a great lake, surrounded by meadows, appears a wish-fulfilling tree or any tree [for that matter]. It has one trunk and five branches. In its centre, there is a lotus flower with sun and moon [disk]. On top of this [seat] is the root lama Vajradhara, with a blue colored body, holding a vajra and a bell crossed in front of his chest. His legs are in the vajra position, he wears all the jewel ornaments and silk garments and is adorned with the major and minor marks [of buddhahood]. All lineage lamas sit, one above the other, above him, or are [imagined] closely surrounding him.

On the branch in front of him, on a seat of lotus, sun and corpse, or on Bhairava and Kālarātri, is glorious Cakrasaṃvara or any other suitable yidam deity,¹² in turn surrounded by the assembly of deities of the four classes of tantra.

On the right branch,¹³ on a throne [supported by] snow lions, with lotus, sun and moon, sits the transcendent perfect conqueror, Śākyamuni Buddha, surrounded by the buddhas of the ten directions.

12. Here one can imagine one's personal yidam deity if other than Cakrasaṃvara.

13. As seen from the position of Vajradhara.

On the back is the precious Dharma in the form of piled-up books, their shimmering golden front pages directed towards you.

On the left are the eight close sons, etc., the Sangha of the greater vehicle (81) like Subhūti, Ānanda, the Supreme Pair,¹⁴ etc., the community of *śrāvakas* and so forth, all gathered together like at a market gathering.

By the edge of the seat of the main figure are the protectors and guardians of the Dharma.

The intermediate spaces are filled with *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs*, like a swirling snowstorm.

On the meadow by the shore of the lake are all beings, as limitless as space, headed by yourself. Leading them, you think: “We go for refuge and develop the [enlightened] attitude.” In this way, according to the explanations above, you think of the appropriate words for going for refuge and the proper way of developing the enlightened attitude:

To the Buddha, the Dharma and the highest community,
Until enlightenment, I go for refuge.

14. The two most excellent amongst the Buddha’s disciples, Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana.

Through the virtue of my practice of generosity and so
forth,
May I achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.
Until I have attained the heart of enlightenment...

and

May all beings have happiness and the causes of
happiness, ...

Chant [these verses] slowly and clearly [understand their] meaning, i.e. merge the recitation with your meditation to the best of your ability. Finally, the sources of refuge melt into light and dissolve into yourself. At that time, meditate and think: “My own three [doors of ordinary] body, speech and mind and the [enlightened] body, speech and awareness¹⁵ of the sources of refuge have become inseparable.”

That was the fifth session.

15. In Tibetan, body, speech and mind of an ordinary or enlightened nature are easily distinguished by the terminology used. Those of ordinary beings are called *lus*, *ngag* and *yid* – whereas those of enlightened beings are called *sku*, *gsung* and *thugs*. In English or German this distinction does not seem to exist since we do not have the honorific form in our languages to the extent that it exists in Tibetan. For that matter, it doesn't exist in Sanskrit either. I have therefore chosen the admittedly somewhat awkward method of distinguishing them by way of inserting [ordinary] and [enlightened] whenever they occur.

[Sixth session]

1.2.2. The meditation and repetition of Vajrasattva, which purifies negativity and obscurations.

Imagine the Lama Vajrasattva above the crown of your head, seated upon a lotus and moon [disk], of white body colour. His right hand holds a vajra at the heart, his left one a bell at his hip. He is adorned with the major and minor marks.

[Then recite:]

Lama Vajrasattva, please purify all my evil deeds and
obscurations!

and

Through ignorance and stupidity,
I have violated the sacred pledges.
Lama protector (82), grant me refuge!
Lord, holder of the vajra,
You are of the nature of great compassion.
Lord of beings, to you I go for refuge.
I confess all breaches of the root and branch
commitments
Which I have committed with body, speech and mind.

Please purify the accumulated stains of evil deeds and obscurations, faults and downfalls.

This prayer causes a stream of white nectar to fall down from the large toe of Vajrasattva's [right] foot, which enters through the *brahmarandra* on the crown of your head. All sicknesses, demons, evil deeds and obscurations leave your body, like water that is poured through a heap of ashes, as a black, sticky flow, through your anus, urethra, the pores of your body, the large toes, etc. Imagine your body becoming like a crystal, freed from blemishes, and repeat the hundred syllables as often as you can.

In the end, he proclaims:

Oh, child of noble family, all your evil deeds and obscurations have been completely purified.

Vajrasattva [then] melts into light and dissolves into yourself. Now think that your own [ordinary] body, speech and mind and the [enlightened] body, speech and awareness of Vajrasattva have become inseparable, just like water that was poured into water. Then, for a while, relax your mind in an uncontrived way, in its own natural state, and just leave it like this.

That was the sixth session.

[Seventh session]

1.2.3. The explanation of mandala [offerings], which bring about the two accumulations

There are two: the practice *maṇḍala* and the offering *maṇḍala*.

1. Hold one of the *maṇḍala* plates in your [left] hand, and while holding the grains [in your right], wipe off the dust by way of making three anti-clockwise movements on the plate. Imagine how all impurities, resulting from the misperception of the perceived and the perceiver, are purified into emptiness. Then, [repeat the movement] three times in a clockwise manner and imagine that the accumulations of merit and primordial awareness are perfected. Place the heaps [of grains] in the centre and the four cardinal directions. Imagine the *maṇḍala* as a palace and [imagine] the heaps as the assembly of the five precious ones, as [explained] in the paragraph on the refuge objects. In order to simplify the actual offering, imagine that all their faces are turned towards you. (83) Then place [this *maṇḍala* plate] in the centre of your shrine.

2. As with the accomplishment *maṇḍala*, you wipe [the offering *maṇḍala*] three times in an anti-clockwise way. Think that all negativities, obscurations, downfalls and broken commitments,

contained within your own mindstream and that of others, have become pure. Place the heaps [of grains] in the four cardinal and four intermediary directions.

Recite: “This ground, with perfumed water...” and think that you are presenting as many offerings as possible, as many maṇḍalas as possible, the outer offerings such as the two kinds of water, the five kinds of enjoyments, the five kinds of sense pleasures; the inner offerings such as the five kinds of meat and the five kinds of nectar, etc.; the secret offerings such as the sixteen kinds of consorts,¹⁶ etc. and highest bliss. All of this is offered from the state of non-duality of offering and the one who offers.

Pray: “Grant your blessings that through my offering thus, the two accumulations will be perfected and that excellent experiences and realisations may be achieved.” Then, imagine that the assembly of deities of the accomplishment maṇḍala melts into light and dissolves into yourself. Rest for a while in uncontrived meditative absorption.¹⁷

That was the seventh session.

16. Previously Cakrasaṃvara has been mentioned as the main yidam deity on the refuge tree. The sixteen consorts are a reference to that, as they are found specifically in the extensive practice of Cakrasaṃvara.

17. Tib. *ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*, meditative concentration, contemplation, etc.

[Eighth session]

1.2.4. The Guru Yoga through which Blessings Enter Swiftly

You appear clearly as a yidam deity such as Cakrasaṃvara. Above the crown of your head appears your own root lama in the form of a fully ordained monk, wearing the black crown and being of golden complexion. As an expression of the inseparability of means and wisdom, he holds vajra and bell crossed [in front of his chest], etc. So, imagine him as described in the *Guru Yoga in Four Sessions* and address your prayers to him accordingly.

Alternatively, you can imagine your own root lama in his own form, as he truly looks, or in the form of any yidam deity that you are familiar with. Then imagine how all the lamas, from him up to Vajradhara, one above the other, are present above the crown of his head, or imagine that they are closely [seated] all around him. Give rise to immeasurable and extraordinary devotion ⁽⁸⁴⁾ to him [and pray]:

Glorious, precious Lama,
Please bestow upon me swiftly,
The four empowerments,

The ripening of the four tantra classes and
accomplishments of the four activities.
May experiences and realisations [arise] effortlessly,
In my mindstream now.
May I attain your state,
And establish beings in that [same state].

These and other prayers should be recited extensively and for a long time from the bottom of your heart, until your outlook is transformed.

The lamas of the lineage, as well as the assembly of buddhas, bodhisattvas, ḍākas, ḍākinīs, protectors and guardians of the Dharma, dissolve into the root lama. In this way, consider the root lama as the embodiment of all precious ones. Then, perform the triple outer, inner and secret offering and the seven branches.¹⁸ Repeat the following and other suitable prayers:

Our mothers, all beings, who are as numerous as space is
vast, pray to the lama, the precious Buddha.
... pray to the all-pervasive Dharmakāya.

18. Tib. *yan lag bdun pa*, a traditional means for the accumulation of merit. One begins with (1) prostrations and (2) offerings, which are then followed by (3) the confession of misdeeds, (4) the rejoicing in the merits of others, (5) requesting the teachers to turn the wheel of the Dharma, (6) imploring them to remain with us and not pass into *nirvāṇa*, and finally (7) the dedication of the merit thus accumulated for the welfare of all beings.

... pray to the great blissful body of perfect enjoyment
[Saṃbhogakāya].

... pray to the compassionate emanation body
[Nirmanakāya].

Wishing to receive the four empowerments from the lama, think of him as the enlightened embodiment of the three precious ones and give rise to devotion and yearning, and [imagine] that white, red and blue light radiates from his forehead, throat and heart. Melting into your own three places, the veils and obscurations of your [ordinary] body, speech and mind are purified. [In this way] you receive the flask, secret, and wisdom-awareness empowerments. You are empowered to traverse the paths of development process meditation, the meditations of channels, winds and essences, and the meditations of the union of means and understanding of the four kinds of joy.¹⁹ The auspicious coincidence of the fruition of Nirmanakāya, Saṃbhogakāya and Dharmakāya has definitely occurred.

Again, five-coloured light radiates from all the places of the lama's body and dissolves into your body. In this way, your three doors, as well as your veils, obscurations and habitual tendencies, are purified (85), and you receive the fourth empowerment,

19. Tib. *dga' bzhi*, (1) joy, (2) supreme joy, (3) transcendent joy, and (4) connate joy.

which enables you to traverse the path of inseparable awareness and emptiness. You become a fortunate one who accomplishes the fruition of the Svabhavikakāya, or the body of great bliss.

Then the lama melts into light and dissolves into you. The lama's [enlightened] body, speech and mind, and your own [ordinary] body, speech and mind become inseparable, and you rest uncontrivedly in this state for a while. This being of utmost importance, meditate earnestly.

If, while practising these four preliminaries, signs appear even in dreams [indicating] that you have gained experience in them by way of practising the four sessions with exertion and perseverance, being inseparable from them, this then is the sign of your having become accustomed to them.

Because the signs of the increasing of accumulations and the purification of obscurations [will] appear both in actuality and in dreams, [continue to] practise with perseverance.

That was the eighth session.

[Ninth session]

The special preliminaries, the four conditions for practice

Impermanence arousing one's being, and seeing both the general and specific characteristics of the phenomena of the cycle of existence, you earnestly [give rise to] revulsion and renunciation. Therefore, this is the causal condition.

To be held by a perfect spiritual guide, a lama of the lineage of individuals, a lama of the words of the Sugatas, the lama of ultimate nature, the symbolic teacher of one's [own] experiences, etc., is the main condition. Therefore, rely upon him in this way.

Through this, all aspects of clinging to biased imputations, which are none other than conceptual labelling, have been completely cut off. That which does not contradict all these and yet is so much more sublime, is the initial basic mode of being, the unfabricated and natural state of phenomena. This unmistakable meditation object, being the object condition, gain certainty in this.

Being free of clinging to meditation, you give rise to heartfelt perseverance. [At the same time] you are free of the characteristics of hope and fear, like the thoughts, "I meditate, have

meditated, will meditate. If meditation arises, it is good; if it does not arise, it is not good”, etc. (86) Therefore, cultivate whatever appears. This being the immediate condition, gain certainty in this way.

As an immediate result of these four practice conditions²⁰ taken together, all meditation experiences and insights will arise effortlessly. These are the special preliminaries from among the [chapter on the] preliminaries.

These practice condition sessions, taken together [as one session], constitute the ninth session.

20. If one were to summarize these four, one could also call them (1) the causal condition: revulsion for saṃsāra, (2) the principal condition: relying on a Guru, (3) the focal condition: directly recognizing mind nature and (4) the immediate condition: the absence of either hope or fear concerning one’s practice.

2. The Main Body of the Practice



2.1. Mental Calm

2.2. Deep Insight

2.1. Mental calm

2.1.1. The key points of the body

2.1.2. The key points of the mind

[Tenth session]

2.1.1. The key points of the body

The legs are in the vajra-position; the hands are [positioned] in the [gesture of] meditative composure, about four finger-breadths below your navel; the spine is straight; the shoulders are stretched like the wings of a vulture; the neck is slightly bent; the tongue, in its natural position, lightly touches the palate; the eyes are half open, half closed and focus upon a point about four finger-breadth in front of the tip of your nose.

Such a position reduces fears and is not uncomfortable. By means of this comfortable and relaxed position, successively the downward-clearing wind is brought under control; the water-wind enters into the central channel; the fire-dwelling and the earth-winds enter into the central channel; the all-pervasive and the fire-winds enter into the central channel; and the life-sustaining and wind-winds enter into the central channel.

Additionally, by adopting a posture centred on these physical key points, immeasurable qualities such as the pliability of channels and winds arise. Even just by maintaining these physical key points, meditative experiences and insights blaze

on their own. Therefore, assume the posture with the physical key points in this way.

First, expel the stale breath. Then, naturally and free of any effort, refresh the memory of the rough sequence of the preliminaries, and let yourself relax as is comfortable.

2.1.2. The key points of the mind

2.1.2.1. Generally

2.1.2.2. Individually

2.1.2.1. Generally

Do not hanker after the past, do not [even] think of it. Do not invite the future. Do not muse, “I will do this, I will do that...” Without speculating about the present, evaluating it or pushing anything aside, maintain the state of this suddenly appearing ordinary mind,²¹ (87) without anything to be avoided or to be adopted, without hope or fear or [wanting to] improve anything.

21. Tib. *tha mal shes pa*. This term “ordinary mind”, which occurs several times throughout the text, may require an explanation. One could easily misunderstand and consider it to mean one’s deluded everyday consciousness which is unaware of its true nature. Nothing could be further from the actual meaning. „Ordinary mind” refers to the nature of mind as it truly is, as it would “ordinarily” appear, were it not for the multiple layers of deluded ideas and concepts that we obscure it with. One could also translate it as „ordinary consciousness” or „normal consciousness”.

Mental calm

Instead, leave this mind, to the best of your ability, in the state of this unfabricated freshness, just as it is.

That was the tenth session.

[Eleventh session]

2.1.2.2. Individually

If your mind is unable to rest like this, [1] place in front of you a [small] piece of wood and focus your mind upon this. [Or,] [2] place in front of you a statue of the Buddha, adorned with the physical marks [of excellence], or imagine one. If sinking, dullness, or drowsiness occur, project your mind one-pointedly upon the crown of [the Buddha's] head or upon the circle of hair [between his eyebrows], and leave it like this. When agitation occurs or [when you feel] scattered, [concentrate upon] the navel, the wheels upon [the soles of] his feet or the rim of his seat. When neither sinking nor agitation occurs, [concentrate upon] his entire body or the eternal knot upon his heart centre. [3] Focus your mind upon [an object] such as a butter lamp about four finger-breadth in height. [4.] Focus your mind upon an opening of the empty sky, approximately the size of the palm of [your] hand, or upon an area of empty space of random dimensions. [5] Draw the syllables of the Buddha's [enlightened] body, speech and awareness — a white OM̐, a red ĀḤ and a blue HŪḤ — place them before yourself and focus upon these. [6] Focus your mind upon either painted or imagined white, red

or blue circles, whatever is suitable. In brief, focus on whatever shape seems appropriate.

Even though there are many [methods of this kind], they are all included in the [above-mentioned ones]. If you choose only one of these, whichever you find easy to focus upon, that is sufficient. It is by no means necessary to [apply] them one after the other.

The [actual] method of letting [mind] be, is like this: when mind rests, without the basic nature being present as anything [in particular], without your consciousness grasping it as holding onto anything, let it be like this. If it moves, watch. Do not restrict it, but let it wander freely. Completely cut off all conceptual ideas like thinking, “I do meditate” or “I do not meditate” or the hope that mind will come to rest, or the fear that it will not come to rest, etc. (88) If it occurs that the object of attention moves or disintegrates,²² or that your eyes become numb, do not continue looking at it. Look directly [into space] at the level of your eyes. [While doing so] relax your mind in its own nature and just leave it like this.

22. Tib. *dmigs rten 'gul ba'am grum pa'am*, the new edition of this text published by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche's Vajra Vidya Institute Library adds at this point *mi mthong ba'am*, “if it can not be seen [anymore]” before continuing with *mig sbrid pa* “if your eyes become numb”.

Do not create a point of reference upon which to meditate. Be undistracted and leave awareness unmodified, without dullness or lethargy, in brilliant, crystal clear luminosity. Finish the meditation [session] while it is good; rest with lucid clarity and joyfulness in short sessions, often repeated; and take breaks frequently. It is of great importance to practise in such a way as not to get weary [of the meditation].

That was the eleventh session.

[Twelfth session]

In this regard, [once your] mind has taken hold of this, gradually also focus upon sounds as the objects of the ears, scents as the objects of the nose, tastes as the objects of the tongue, and textures as the objects of the body, etc. [Use] everything that can be heard or experienced [in any which way], etc. While doing so, fixate your mind on the clearly audible sound or the scent and focus it undistractedly with the iron hook of awareness. Do nothing other than leave it in its unfabricated and natural state, without analysing as to whether [the object of your attention] is good or bad, large or small, etc. Just focus your mind upon whatever there is. Bring the session to an end while clarity is still increasing and relax. Do not [permit] sluggishness to take hold.

During all session breaks, do not let the thread of mindfulness be interrupted. Direct your gaze to the tip of your nose. Whether the body is walking, sitting, or talking, do not do so excessively or in an overly harsh way. Cut off the stream of thinking and musing [about] imaginary constructs and familiarise yourself more and more with resting in meditative equipoise.

That was the twelfth session.

[Thirteenth session]

Again, if drowsiness or agitation occur while focusing your mind internally, use these methods to dispel them: focus your mind upon any yidam deity or the lama in your heart, or upon a sphere of light as the essence of the lama. When drowsiness and lethargy occur, imagine in your heart a white eight-petalled²³ lotus flower with a white sphere of at least the size of a pea²⁴ upon its centre. Imagine how [this sphere] shoots straight from the heart through the crown of the head and rests, lucidly clear, in open space for a while. Avoid all kinds of warmth, such as thick clothes, the sun, or fire. Do not partake of heavy foods. Sprinkle yourself with water. (89) Allow fresh air and cold wind to touch you. Look at or stay on mountain peaks.

When agitation and scatteredness, etc., occur, imagine a black lotus flower in your heart facing downwards. Imagine a black sphere sinking [downwards] from it, like a severed string, exiting through the urethra and sinking into the edge of your cushion

23. In his extensive *Mahāmudrā, The Ocean of Definitive Meaning* [phyag chen nges don rgya mtsho], Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje advises to imagine a four-petalled lotus flower. We can assume that the number of petals makes no difference.

24. Tib. *sran ma*, this Tibetan term is variously said to mean a bean, a pea or a lentil, or any kind of pulses for that matter. According to Ven. Kyabje Tenga Rinpoche it would be correct to imagine this sphere to have about the size of a pea.

and [further downwards] into the golden ground. Clothing and behaviour, etc., are the opposite of the ones mentioned above. Keep warm.

If there is neither drowsiness nor agitation and your awareness rests in its [natural] state, direct your gaze and mental focus upon any appropriate [object] immediately before you. [Alternatively, focus upon] a small blue sphere or a similar object at the borderline between shade and sunlight.

Regarding these, at first be decisive in establishing them clearly by way of thinking, “I imagine exactly such a sphere, etc,” and focus your mind upon it intensely. If, after this, [it appears] clearly, that is best. However, even if it does not appear clearly, think, “Such a thing is there”, and make it the object of your mental focus. Do not analyse or examine, but leave your mind relaxed and undistracted in its unfabricated and natural state. Conclude the session while clarity is still increasing. Perform short sessions often repeated.

That was the thirteenth session.

[Fourteenth session]

Then, focus your mind upon the non-existence of a support. Imagine how earth, water, fire and space dissolve into each other, one by one and thus become a great void. Direct your concentration with wide open eyes into the utterly empty, vast expanse of space before you. Leaving mind unfabricated, without any [ideas of] existence or non-existence, being or non-being, etc., relax loosely and leave it at ease. Leave mind [as it is], just being mindful of not wandering.²⁵ Leave your mind without giving in to distractions for even an instant, as if threading a needle; without any movement, like an ocean devoid of any waves; effortless and without trying to achieve anything, like a garuda soaring through the sky; free of any hope and fear, like a lion resting in the snow. In this way, you will be undistracted, and no thought [activity] will occur.

When you [become] distracted, [at first] a single thought will form. Recognise it immediately when it appears. Desire, anger and delusion (90), etc., no matter which of these three unvirtuous thoughts occurs, or virtuous ones [like thoughts of] generosity, etc., or neutral ones, identify them clearly without any affirming

25. The *gdams ngag mdzod* edition of this text reads [*ma yengs pa'i rgyang so tsam bkod nas bzhang*] here, whereas the Vajra Vidya Institute Library version reads [*ma yengs dran pa'i rgyangs so tsam bkod nas bzhang*].

or negating, accepting or rejecting, liking or disliking. Rest your mind undistractedly upon this and look with the eye of knowledge. Use the thought as a support for focusing your mind. Free yourself of the faults of being [either] too tightly focused or too relaxed. Just rest, without falling into either of these [faults].

That was the fourteenth session.

[Fifteenth session]

If you do not attain stability through this, use the breath as the focus of your attention. Regarding this [technique], there are two methods: flask-breathing²⁶ and counting.

First, dispel the stale breath with the nine-fold exhalation and then hold it by way of swallowing some saliva and pressing [the breath] down below the navel. Hold it there as long as you can. When releasing, as you expel the breath, leave the lower wind in its own place for the time being. After having trained in this [exercise] well, pull the lower wind up slightly. Train in this flask-breathing.

Then, inhale a little again. Focus your mind upon the crystal clear empty interior [of your body], about four finger-breadths below your navel. Now and then, focus loosely upon the [point between your] eyebrows. Do not hold [the breath] when you are either very full or hungry. Do this as much as you can at times such as daybreak.

26. The flask-breathing, or [*bum can*], is a rather forceful method which requires some exercise and getting used to. Ven. Kyabje Tenga Rinpoche usually advises beginners with such practices to first employ the gentle breathing [*jam rlung*] and then the intermediate breathing [*bar rlung*] before attempting the method of flask-breathing.

If [your mind] is not tamed in this way, focus upon counting. Counting inhalation, resting and exhalation as one, count these [sequences] mentally, first 21 times, then 100 times, then 1000 times, etc. Focus exclusively upon [the breath at] your nostrils and do not be distracted by anything at all. While continuing in this manner, rely on one of these [methods in order] to produce stillness.

Whether an individual is of the instantaneous type,²⁷ the skip-the-grades type²⁸ or the gradual type,²⁹ it is [accordingly] more or less easy to bring about this calm, but the corresponding [result] will occur. Do hold onto it and do not be discouraged. In this way, it is impossible that [the result] will not be attained.

In accordance with the instructions of a lama who possesses experience (91), three kinds of calm resting will gradually occur. The first [of these] is like a waterfall plunging from a steep mountain; the second is like a slowly flowing stream; and the last is like a great, unmoving ocean.

It may seem now that, compared to the past, your thought activity has become more coarse. That is because you were previously simply not aware of [these thoughts]. Now that you are resting

27. Tib. *cig car ba*

28. Tib. *thod rgal ba*

29. Tib. *rim gyis pa*

in meditative equanimity, you do notice them. Therefore, keep to this without being irritated. Through this, [mental calm] will occur out of its own accord, without your thought activity causing any disquiet. Even if it did not occur within this triple [framework], persevere! It will arise through tightening, loosening and reversal meditation.³⁰

Through tightening, you apply all of body, mind, consciousness and gaze. Just like walking on a bridge that consists only of a single beam, without a reference point upon which to meditate, exert yourself continuously. Keep your sessions short.

As for loosening, relax through yogic exercises and gazes, etc., relax the mind itself loosely in its own natural mode of being. Without fabrication, without self, within anything that might occur, leave mind at ease. Free of effort, like a small child with a full stomach, leave mind at ease and uphold a light mindfulness merely through not wandering. Apart from that, there is not a thing to contemplate. Make your sessions slightly longer.

As for reversal meditation, once you have clearly identified whatever thought activities might occur, consider them as helpful. Let go of all accepting and rejecting, hope and fear,

30. Tib. *bzlog sgom*, a rather uncommon term; while during calm resting one usually wishes to be without thoughts, it refers to actually wanting thoughts to occur, as focus for further training.

but recognise them. The more thoughts there are, the better! However much mental stirring there might be, let it stir. Do not follow them, but, as before, [merely] recognise them. Do not affirm or negate them in any way whatsoever. Even if sicknesses, sufferings or emotional defilements arise strongly, view them in this way, and they will thus subside by themselves.

That was the fifteenth session.

[Sixteenth session]

Now follows the manner of how to give rise to “mental calm”³¹ and the pointing-out:

By the power of having focused your mind, it rests [either] a little or [even] completely. This is what is called “mental calm”. However, merely a vacant state in which no thoughts occur³² should not be called “mental calm”.

Mental calm means (92) to have brought to a complete standstill emotional defilements and conceptual discursive thinking, and to rest one-pointedly in the radiant clarity of the essence of virtue, free of drowsiness and agitation. What was formerly accompanied by effort is now free of effort and, at the same time, easy, spacious, and comfortable to maintain. Even when rising from one’s meditation [session], mind does not [move] towards anything but remains there. Within all four modes of conduct, consciousness is majestic³³ and relaxed, and appearances are insubstantial.³⁴ If consciousness does not willingly

31. Tib. *zhi gnas*, Skr. *śamatha*

32. Tib. *'phro ba*, projection, proliferation of thought, thought occurrence, etc.

33. Tib. *lhun chags*, majestic, dignified, magnificent

34. Tib. *bkrag med*, this term has a whole variety of meanings, such as not bright, not flashy or dazzling, without brilliance, dull and even insubstantial, which strikes me as the best here.

concern itself with any given object, it does not [clearly] take note of its contours.³⁵ It seems as if forgetfulness has increased. You perceive all sorts of meditational experiences, such as bliss, clarity, and non-thought. Where such [temporary] meditational experiences are concerned, many [paranormal] abilities appear, such as clairvoyance, magical powers or the ten signs [of successful practice]. When these have appeared within oneself, they are the basis for the arising of all qualities, such as deep insight,³⁶ etc. At this time, all sorts of illnesses, pains, sufferings and unfounded accusations³⁷ may occur; good and bad dreams; clairvoyance and magical powers; meditational experiences of bliss, clarity, and non-thought, etc. In whichever way these may have occurred, give up attachment and aversion [to these]. Having thus meditated diligently without any attachment, the qualities will be beyond all imagination.

Therefore, true mental calm is to be cultivated free of the faults of lethargy and distraction, etc. Assiduously establish exactly this within your being and make this your main concern. Such is the sole identification of “mental calm”.

That was the sixteenth session.

35. Tib. *spu ris*, lit. hairlines

36. Tib. *lhag mthong*, Skr. *vipaśanā*

37. Tib. *ma nyes pa'i kha yog*

2.2. Deep Insight

2.2.1. Watching

2.2.2. Pointing out

Watching

2.2.1.1. Watching while resting

2.2.1.2. Watching while there is movement

2.2.1.3. Watching while there are appearances

2.2.1.4. Watching whether body and mind are one and
the same or different

2.2.1.5. Watching calm and movement

[Seventeenth session]

2.2.1.1. Watching while resting

As to the first, adopt the same physical posture as before. The gaze being of great importance here, direct it slightly higher than before and stare without hesitation, (93) swaying or leaning³⁸ straight ahead without blinking.³⁹ Roughly bring to mind the sequence of the preliminary stages. Then, relax your mind in its own natural state. Your mind will then rest unmistakably, radiant and vivid. While resting in this way, uphold a momentary⁴⁰ mindfulness. While mental calm is still clear:

1. Watch while considering, “How is the essence of this mind, its colour, its form or shape, its arising, dwelling and ceasing, its existence or non-existence?” Watch whether this mind has an existence inside or outside of the body, and as to which colour or form it might have.
2. Apart from resting thus, is there anything other than this to be found?

38. Tib. *tsham tshum khyar khyur ya yo med pa*.

39. Tib. *ha re blta*, to focus the eyes without blinking.

40. Tib. *yud de ba, yud tsam*, momentary, for a fleeting instant, etc.

3. Is it unidentifiable because it is empty, something non-existent, like a rabbit's horn?

4. Is there a recognition of a consciousness that, while resting, is unidentifiable, as [something] clear and lucid and blissfully relaxed, [something] that cannot be described in words?

5. Is the essence of such resting an indifferent, totally oblivious state of mind that is not aware of anything and without any clarity?

6. Is it a stillness which is vividly awake, naked and quiet?

7. There may be faults concerning the basic view. Therefore, if your understanding is of the dry, intellectual sort, or if you use high-sounding Dharma language, or even though it has not arisen, you create ideas through the eight [worldly] dharmas; you just deceive yourself, and it is of little use. Therefore, persevere⁴¹ and bring about experiences through the power of uncontrived meditation that grows from within, not mere mental patchwork that comes together through conceptual thinking.

Once more, relax and watch again. Watch in such a way as to bring about certainty in your mindstream.

That was the seventeenth session.

41. Tib. *rdo rus gtugs*, lit. "let stone hit upon bone"

[Eighteenth session]

2.2.1.2. Watching while there is movement

Now [do the practice of] watching while there is movement. From the physical posture and the rough sequence of the preliminary practices to watching while resting, bring these points to mind [again]. Relax loosely in the state of unmistakable resting in mind [nature] and leave it at that. Then, a fleeting thought occurs [either by itself] or you give rise to one.

1. How is the essence of this fleeting thought? In which way does it have colour or form? ⁽⁹⁴⁾ How is its arising, dwelling and ceasing? Look at the essence of the moving thought without attaching too much importance to [the thought itself].
2. While many thoughts, emotional defilements, the three poisons, etc., have either arisen [by themselves] or you have given rise to them, look at them as before.
3. See what the difference is between the thought itself and its object and previous thoughts.
4. When observing these thoughts, is it the case that all thoughts are empty, free of [conceptual] elaboration, [and free of] arising and ceasing?

5. Do these thoughts which arise disappear one by one without a trace once you look at them?

6. Are these arisen thoughts self-liberated as a naked, clear awareness, without being identified as anything? Observe and see.

7. If it is like the former, look as to whether there is a difference between the previous naked and clear awareness while resting and the naked and clear awareness that is now seen while there is movement. And when all the thoughts that have appeared are not identified as anything,⁴² look whether there is still a thought like, “They are beyond identification” or not.

8. Look whether thoughts become clear awareness through pulling them back and then leaving them as empty clarity.

9. Look whether arising and liberation have become simultaneous through your looking at the essence of the suddenly arisen first thought, which is not tainted by anything.

Look in such a way as to bring about absolute certainty regarding these extraordinary ways of experiencing.

That was the eighteenth session.

42. Tib. *ngos gzung rgyu med pa*, unidentifiable, ungraspable, intangible, beyond identification.

[Nineteenth session]

2.2.1.3. Watching while there are appearances

As to the third, clearly recall the essential points of the body and the preliminaries. [Then], direct your gaze towards an appropriate object such as a pillar, a flask, a wall, a mountain or a building. Look directly at it. Relax a little and leave it at that. Then look again.

In this same way, look at the objects of the five senses: form, sound, scent, taste and touch. While doing so, think, “How is their essence, their colour, their form, their arising, dwelling and ceasing, etc.?” Analyse to the limit the basis of all — sickness, suffering, heat, cold, etc. — and look.

Look how it is: (95) Has the phenomenon ceased through your looking at it? Or do you yourself and the phenomenon appear as something different? Do appearances come into the mind [from the outside]? Or does mind grasp the phenomenon as external and thinks, “Is it a phenomenon”? Are mind and phenomenon inseparable? Or is there a clearly discernible existence as empty appearance without an object?

When, in the moment of your looking at it, the object appears vividly clear “over there”, do you then think to yourself, “It is

over there”? There is no reason to think like this, as the mind that observes the object directly and openly is open and free of any conceptual clinging; just like a small child looking at a temple has no reason to think [of the things it sees] as either one or distinct from one another. If it is like the first, look exactly at just that.

That was the nineteenth session.

[Twentieth session]

2.2.1.4. Watching whether body and mind are one and the same or different

Fourth, investigate [whether or not] body and mind are one and the same or different. Are body and mind distinct from one another? If they were one, then the body, which is born and dies, and the mind, which is unborn and does not die, cannot be one. Not only that, but the body is matter, whereas mind is consciousness.

Also, these two are not one! If they were one, then once the body has died, the mind would also have died. If the body is pricked by a thorn, then the mind would also be pricked by that thorn. If they were different, which of the two would feel that the body has been pricked by a thorn? Body or mind? If only the body would feel this, then even a corpse would feel it. If mind would feel it, then, even though body and mind would be different, mind should feel physical pain [as well].

Therefore mind should also [experience] pain when earth or stones are harmed. However, it doesn't happen that way.

Therefore, look carefully. Understand that all emerging sensations are like water and waves,⁴³ and observe.

That was the twentieth session.

43. Water and waves being of the same nature; a common analogy. While appearing differently, they are not distinct from one another.

[Twenty-First session]

2.2.1.5. Watching calm and movement

Fifth, observing whether calm and movement are one or different. Once again, look into the essence of mind while it rests in the state of empty clarity. [Then,] again allow a single thought to move and look into its essence. Examine whether or not these two are of the same essence (96) or different.

1. If they are different, examine how so: are they different by way of colour, form or essence? Are they of the same strength, like two threads laid out next to each other on a plane surface?
2. Is the resting like the ground and the moving like a [swaying] tree?⁴⁴
3. Or is it like [the strands of] a rope, where there alternatively is no resting while moving and no moving while resting? Look and see.
4. If they are one, how could movement, which shows in all possible forms, and resting, which is naturally quiet, be one? If they are one, is the way in which they are one like a change

44. My two versions of the text have different spellings here, both of which make sense, in a way. The first reads: [*gnas pa sa lta bu la 'gyu ba shing lta bu'am*], the second however: [*gnas pas lta bu la 'gyu shing rta lta bu'am*], which would translate as: "Is there movement with the resting like with a vehicle?" I think the first is the correct one, since the second would be bad grammar and is obviously wrong.

from iron into gold, and they are one by way of the one having changed into something other?

5. Or are they like water mixed with milk, and thus one?

6. Or is it rather like water and waves, which essentially are not different but which appear alternately; so that there is no movement while resting and no resting while moving? The essence of both is equally clear and empty.

7. When thinking, “It is like the former”, observe how it is: are thoughts, through your having drawn them back, and leaving mind in meditation, [present as] clarity and emptiness?

8. Or does this occur after they have dissolved?

9. Or is it like this with whatever occurs, just as soon as it arises, that whatever appears disappears without a trace? Look and see.

Through your observing in this way, you resolve stillness and movement. Observing like this is like a small child looking at [the images inside] a temple. In just this way of observing, exert yourself wholeheartedly. If you keep this up, without clinging to deception⁴⁵ or dry theoretical understanding, there is no way that you will not see mind essence!

That was the twenty-first session.

45. Tib. *zab zob*.

[Twenty-Second session]

Pointing out

Applying the first kind of looking, the essence of the resting and moving mind [appears] not [to be] just empty. In the state of resting, the mind, which cannot be clearly identified with anything such as having colour, form, etc., is clear and lucid, comfortable, at ease and cannot be described in words, is recognised with certainty. Suppose someone who has recognised and decided upon this says, “There is a clarity and emptiness which cannot be recognised as anything.” If this is [merely] an intellectual understanding, then it is unreliable and nothing whatsoever will come of it. [However,] if it comes from within, then it is the emergence of deep insight out of resting⁴⁶ and as such is the seeing of the essence while resting [in stillness]. At exactly that, (97) look at all times, whether you are having good or bad meditation experiences, and look again and again.

It is not [the kind of] resting [stained] with the mistake of total obliviousness,⁴⁷ but it is vividly awake and naked. Within this,

46. Tib. *gnas pa la lhag thong shar ba*, “the emergence of vipaśyanā out of śamatha”

47. Tib. *nag thom me ba*, pitch black, totally oblivious

all characteristics of thought activity have naturally subsided, and one rests one-pointedly in the essence of virtue.

It is unmistakable mental calm, stillness, comfortably relaxed, free of words and expressions, something to be experienced. Leave your mind in exactly this state and look. In this way, you will recognise it to be utterly free of any arising, ceasing, colour or form. Also, there is no mental telling yourself that [any of] this is so. Thus, it is understood as being free from arising and ceasing. Know this recognition to be the emergence of deep insight from non-thought.

That was the twenty-second session.

[Twenty-Third session]

When, through the second kind of looking, all the various thought movements are like an emptiness, free from arising and ceasing, then that is [merely] so much talk of emptiness. When they occur without leaving a trace, a little bit of insight has arisen. When the idea of “there is nothing whatsoever to be clearly identified” does not even occur, while, without grasping and without identifying, arising and liberating appear simultaneously, that is the recognition of movement’s nature.

Recognise furthermore that thoughts and their objects, the mind whether it is still or moves, and previous thoughts, are [all] neither good nor bad. Without there being any difference, they are realised as naked insight.

Thoughts do not become a clear emptiness after being withdrawn or after subsiding. The realisation that thoughts are clear emptiness at the very moment they arise is the recognition of their very nature. Thought’s movement, stillness and their very essence, these three are naked clarity and emptiness. There is no difference whatsoever between thought and non-thought other than the exaggerations of the mind, which does not recognise them!

Previously, thoughts were not recognised. It was ignorance, and thus did not become meditation. When recognising now, the thoughts themselves are meditation and primordial awareness. (98) At this point, make thoughts the root of meditation. Previously, you did not see it because thoughts obscured themselves. Now, meditation on thoughts is superior to meditation on non-thought. Therefore, recognise thoughts whenever they arise. If there are no thoughts, however, [simply] leave mind in its unthinking state. There is no need to project thoughts. If thoughts arise, just leave the mind in the state of their arising. They do not need to be dissolved.⁴⁸

Without giving rise to hope or fear, make the thoughts themselves the essential object of meditation. These thoughts are nothing other than mind. Mind is self-liberated, naked clarity and emptiness. It is Dharmakāya itself, free of something to be liberated and something that causes the liberation. Such realisation is the arising of insight, which is thus pointed out as the union of clarity and emptiness, which is Dharmakāya. In brief: recognise whatever arises and simply leave mind uncontrived and undistracted in just that.

That was the twenty-third session.

48. Tib. *zhog la sdu*, to dissolve, to disperse, etc.

[Twenty-Fourth session]

When observing appearances, the objects are clear and without obstruction. The observing mind is relaxed and does not grasp [onto the object], and there occurs no thinking like, “There are objects out there.” Like with a child seeing a shrine room, appearances — without being [labelled] as [certain] objects — are vivid. Appearances and mind are not different. The very luminosity of mind itself appears unobstructed. When it is recognised as clear emptiness, that is deep insight arising from appearances. Know this unity of appearances and emptiness as the Dharmakāya.

That was the twenty-fourth session.

[Twenty-Fifth session]

Having observed body and mind (99), one sees that they are neither one nor different, but clear and empty in appearance, like a [reflection of the] moon in water. Whatever appears in the way of sensations, such as heat or cold, etc., is not recognised as appearance and emptiness, and under their influence, the power of habitual tendencies is thus formed. That, in turn, through mental attribution, leads to solid grasping of them. Apart from that, it is an appearance free of any basis for attribution, in the sense of an existing object of perception, which someone could sense with either mind or body, etc. Properly direct your mind to this.

By piercingly looking at appearances, they return back to themselves. Free of any fixation, appearances will be vivid. When at this time, you yourself and appearances are objectless appearance and emptiness, that is the falling into place of how things actually are. All is [just] mind — oneself, appearances, mind [itself]. Nothing other than that exists whatsoever, not even in the slightest, just mind and its natural radiance. Body and mind are inseparable, but are nothing other than [mere] classifications — just mind-made labels.

That was the twenty-fifth session.

[Twenty-Sixth session]

Having thus looked at both, stillness and movement, thoughts are understood to be [none other than] meditation. [What's more,] stillness and movement should be known to be one and the same. Their way of arising, however, alternates. When there is stillness, there is no movement. When there is movement, there is no stillness. But the one who causes this is merely mind, and the nature of either is none other than naked clarity and emptiness.

Having gathered thoughts back in, it is not that one [all of a sudden] sees them as naked clarity and emptiness, but rather that right at the beginning they are naked clarity and emptiness [already], and thus one knows the natural state of mind. This is called the “collapse of the division of stillness and movement.” Mind may either be still and vivid in clarity and non-thought, or it may be moved by thoughts. However, the very essence of such thoughts is none other than naked clarity and emptiness.

If you come to realise that all objects and appearances, like water and waves, have no existence other than being the illusory tricks⁴⁹ of your own mind, that is the actual recognition that all appearances are just mind.

49. Tib. *cho 'phrul*, magical display, magical trick, illusion, miracle, machination, etc.

The essence of this mind, by way of examining its going, abiding and arising, is shown not to exist anywhere. Understanding that, just like a horse or an ox in a dream, it has no actual existence, is the recognition of mind's emptiness.

From within emptiness and brilliant clarity, unobstructed great bliss arises spontaneously and in various ways, like the moon's reflection in water. (100) Realising this is the recognition of the spontaneous presence of emptiness.

Spontaneous presence itself does not deviate from clarity, awareness, emptiness, spontaneous simplicity and unchanging great bliss. It is liberated the very instant it arises, just like the loosening of a knot in a snake. Achieving certainty in this is the recognition of spontaneous presence as being self-liberated.

This mind, which must be pointed out, this ordinary mind with its keen awareness of whatever occurs, is [of the nature of] great bliss. It is the unity of clarity and emptiness which is known as "emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects" or just "*Mahāmudrā*." Understanding this is known as "the realisation of *Mahāmudrā*." There is not a thing to meditate upon. Without being distracted for even an instant, allow insight to rest lucidly and naturally.

Without giving rise to hopes or fears of any sort, such as hoping for good and fearing the bad, and while resting loosely and relaxedly in ordinary mind's very nature and maintaining that natural state, in that very instant you see Mahāmudrā, the unity of bliss and emptiness. It is like the very centre of the cloudless, clear and pure sky. It is the union of calm resting and deep insight. It is the very best of experiences and realisations. The path of liberation has been entered upon, and excellence has been attained.⁵⁰

To summarise, what has been pointed out here is non-dual primordial awareness, which is free from all dualistic confusion. It is simplicity, great bliss and emptiness which is endowed with all supreme aspects, in short, that which is known as Mahāmudrā. It hovers above those who have devotion. It surrounds those who supplicate with intense yearning. It descends into those into whom blessings have entered. Not hidden, it exists naturally within you, but has not been recognised previously. Now that it has been pointed out to you, you have arrived at Ground Mahāmudrā, have seen Path Mahāmudrā's essence and have achieved Result Mahāmudrā. Rejoice! To make this the focus of your practice, continuously and from the core of your heart, is of the utmost importance!

50. Tib. *phul du byung ba*, to attain excellence, outstanding, prominent, distinguished, etc.

Thus, the pointing-out instructions have been presented together with the various ways of looking. The pointing-out instructions should be given according to how [the student's] realisation develops. (101) If it is not done that way, or if the pointing-out is given at the beginning only, students who may know the words of the Dharma but whose minds have not yet mixed with it, may very well get jaded and gain merely a dry intellectual understanding. Then, even if they later receive further instructions from others, there will be no possibility of progress. Because there is a risk of such harm, the pointing-out instructions should be given in accordance with the ways of looking, as presented here.

With this, the main part is concluded.

That was the twenty-sixth session.

3. Conclusion



- 3.1. Enhancing the practice and dispelling hindrances
- 3.2. Giving rise to the qualities and the way of traversing the path
- 3.3. The way of manifesting the result

[Twenty-Seventh session]

3.1. Enhancing the Practice and Dispelling Hindrances

The contemplations about the difficulty of finding a free and well-favoured situation, all the way up to [developing the] enlightened attitude, should [also] be considered as Mahāmudrā. What’s more, all of your practice of development- and perfection-process meditations should be endowed with the three types of awareness. While engaging in the four activities, continuously recognise your nature and mix with Mahāmudrā. Practice should not part from the inseparability of calm resting and deep insight, [which is] uncontrived simplicity. Based on this, enhance your practice throughout the four [daily] activities.⁵¹

Also, abandon mistaken thoughts concerning objects, time, essence, nature and knowledge, such as fixating upon virtuous or non-virtuous actions; thinking, “I will attain enlightenment at such and such a time,” even though the three times do not exist; assuming your mind to be ordinary even though it is endowed

51. Tib. *spyod pa bzhi*, the four activities of standing, walking, sitting and lying down.

with the five wisdoms from the very beginning; or not relying on the wisdom that arises from your practice of meditation but hoping to gain liberation through the understanding coming from listening and reflecting.

Assume the key points of the body posture. When mind rests, look at its nature while it is resting. When it moves, look at it while it is moving, and just leave it at that. The posture of your body and meditation, having become [a supple, pliable] one, give up weariness. Abandon clinging to attachment and aversion towards any [meditative] experience or realisation, be they good or bad. Train in the three skills of beginning, interrupting and maintaining the experience.⁵²

Furthermore, (102) if you are attached to bliss, clarity or non-thought, etc., in short: to any experience or realisation whatsoever, it is to go astray and come to ruin. Consequently, give up attachments and aversions!

That was the twenty-seventh session.

52. Tib. *mgo rtsom pa*; *'phro gcod pa*; *nyams skyong ba*, to begin or start; to discontinue, halt or cease; to maintain the experience.

[Twenty-Eighth session]

To conclude that all appearances and phenomena are empty of a self-nature, through reasoning “there is neither one nor many,” that is the misunderstanding that mentally fabricated emptiness is their very nature.

To fixate on emptiness as an antidote and on emotional defilements as something to be abandoned, one fails to realise that all is emptiness. That is to misunderstand⁵³ emptiness as an antidote.

Failing to realise that all of the path, i.e. ground, path and fruition, is the very path that leads to buddhahood, one regards emptiness alone as being of use, and not the other [possible] routes, and fails to consider the aspect of skilful means. That is the misunderstanding regarding emptiness as the [sole] path.

Having no experience, but [attempting] to purify as empty with SVABHĀVA, etc., one generally seals all and everything with emptiness and disregards the consequences of actions. That is the misunderstanding regarding emptiness as labelling.

These four misunderstandings need to be abandoned. For beginners, mind-made emptiness can be useful [for a while], but

53. Tib. *shor ba*, lit. to go astray, to lose sight of, to lapse, etc.

should be abandoned later on. Then, being free from accepting and rejecting, or adopting and abandoning, train yourself in natural resting without fixating upon whatever it is that might arise.

That was the twenty-eighth session.

[Twenty-Ninth session]

At times, thoughts and emotional defilements, etc., arise properly as meditation, but at other times they are uncontrollably wild and move about strongly, which may cause you to be discouraged. Thus, thoughts arise as an enemy. By means of regarding them as helpful, and by resting within this free of fixation, they will be dispelled.

Emotional defilements arise as enemies. Considering all things as non-existent, one disregards cause and effect, which is the arising of emptiness as an enemy.

One clings to the vividly radiant display of a variety of visual appearances and becomes very uneasy with it; thus, appearances arise as an enemy.

One with but a few good qualities sees others as being devoid of the qualities of devotion, compassion (103) and [an understanding of] emptiness. Such a one may give rise to compassion and think, “I should benefit them!” While being unaccomplished, one casts aside one’s practice and rushes headlong into attempting to be helpful. That is the arising of compassion as an enemy.

One’s understanding being unresolved, one wishes to be all-knowing, and proceeds to study all sorts of minor subjects

such as grammar, logic and the arts, and casts aside [the training in] meditative absorption. Thus, one's ideas of cause and effect arise as an enemy.

When any one of these five thoughts arises, just observe their very nature and rest in that. Resting thus, without accepting or rejecting or confirming or negating, they will be dispelled.

In the same way, regard the faults of meditation, such as drowsiness, agitation and dullness, as well as others, such as sicknesses, evil spirits and hindrances to meditative concentration, such as illness, pains, special experiences and realisations, etc. Whatever might arise, give up likes and dislikes and just look at its very nature. Allow it to rest naturally, and it will be pacified all by itself.

Or you can look into the arising, dwelling and going, as well as the colour and form, etc., of these thoughts, illnesses, evil spirits, obstructers and so forth. You can also train in sending and taking in regard to an illness, etc. Or you can train yourself in regarding the arising of manifestations, such as an illness, as *Nirmāṇakāya*, knowing them as *Sam̐bhogakāya*, their empty nature as *Svabhāvikakāya*, and the inseparability of these three as being the *Dharmakāya*.⁵⁴

54. The sequence of *Svabhāvikakāya* and *Dharmakāya* may seem odd here. However, Drubwang Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche explains, that these two can be

That was the combination of dispelling hindrances and enhancing practice. There are many other methods for dispelling obstructions and enhancing practice, but these should be sufficient.

That was the twenty-ninth session.

used interchangeably, because empty nature, which is Dharmakāya, is the very basis for the arising of all *kāyas*.

[Thirtieth session]

3.2. Giving Rise to the Qualities and the Way of Traversing the Path

Taking the preliminaries to heart by way of contemplating the difficulties of obtaining a free and well-favoured condition, as well as impermanence, one's mind turns away from this life. By way of contemplating causes and effects, one will have confidence in these and will guard them, even with one's life. Through contemplating the root evil of saṃsāra, disgust with it will be produced, and one develops renunciation and wishes to attain enlightenment.

By contemplating loving kindness, compassion and the enlightened attitude, one will be free of desire for one's own happiness and (104) will produce only benefit for the welfare of others.

By means of [repeating] the hundred syllables, signs of the purification of negative actions and obscurations will happen in reality, in visions and dreams, etc., and experiences and realisations will occur.

Through the offering of maṇḍalas, both body and mind will become full of joy, and one will have little desire, be content and attain merit without limits.

By way of the practice of Guru Yoga, there will be blazing devotion and meditative absorption. Blessings, experiences and realisations will arise without effort.

Through calm resting, one's body will become very supple.⁵⁵ One will be endowed with supernatural perceptions and miraculous powers. One will have little craving for food and clothing and will be radiant, etc. One's qualities will be limitless.

Having traversed the ten levels and five paths through deep insight, one will attain the perfection of non-meditation.

That was the thirtieth session.

55. Tib. *shin sbyangs*, suppleness, pliancy

[Thirty-First session]

3.3. The Way of Manifesting the Result

As to one proceeding along the path, one does so through one-pointedness, simplicity, one taste and non-meditation, each of which is divided into the categories of lesser, middling and greater.

1. As one gains at first some stability, then lots of stability and finally a great deal of stability in calm resting, one progresses along the path of lesser, middling and greater one-pointedness.
2. As one's experience of that stabilises, one realises all appearances and phenomena as being nothing other than simplicity. One's practice not requiring much attention, first simplicity arises a little bit, then a lot, and finally a great deal. With this, there is at first no stability, then some stability and finally a lot of stability. On this basis, one progresses along the path of lesser, middling and greater simplicity.
3. Then, there occurs at first some realisation that the multiple appearances of phenomena are of one taste. Then there will be a lot of realisation and finally a great deal of realisation thereof,

with at first no stability, then a lot of stability and finally a great deal of stability in the purification of one's previous attachment to emptiness. Thus one progresses from lesser to middling and greater one taste.

4. Then, there initially occurs some degree of realisation that there is neither such a thing as meditation nor a meditator. This then becomes a lot of realisation, and finally a great deal of realisation, which comes with no stability, a lot of stability, and a great deal of stability. One is free of what one previously regarded [as true] — namely, bliss regarding appearances and the illusion of keeping up attentiveness during post-meditation. In this way, one progresses from lesser to middling and greater non-meditation.

Through such *vajra* like meditative absorption, one abandons the two obscurations along with habitual patterns (105) and proceeds to the realms of the Buddhas.

By practising in this way, one proceeds from [lesser] one-pointedness to greater non-meditation. Having then attained enlightenment, one will continuously benefit beings through the four activities⁵⁶ until saṃsāra is emptied. One will spontaneously

56. The four enlightened activities being pacifying, increasing, controlling and destroying.

accomplish pervasive Buddha activity, which establishes all and sundry on the path of ripening and liberation.

Therefore, taking these vital points to heart, if you do not abandon practice,⁵⁷ it is certain that you will attain enlightenment in one lifetime and one body!

Hence, I have composed this practice manual, which combines short notes on the stages of the famous “Connate Mahāmudrā” of the Kamtsang tradition into practice sessions.

May both the Gurus as well as the *ḍākinīs* be forgiving of anything that might be contradictory or confused.

Whatever virtue I may have accumulated in this way, I dedicate to be a cause for all beings, who are as infinite as space, to realise Mahāmudrā in a single life and spontaneously accomplish the two benefits!

Gugungpa Nangso Chötrinpa,⁵⁸ a heart son of the glorious Guru, who is highly reputed in the two traditions,⁵⁹ urged me with the

57. Tib. *sgom skyes bdag med par ma song na*, lit. if your practice does not become substanceless. [*bdag med*] usually means egolessness or selflessness, but can also refer to insubstantiality, lack of essence, non-existence, etc.

58. A master who, like the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, was one of the close students of the Fifth Shamarpa Könchok Yenlak.

59. The secular as well as the religious systems.

words, “It is necessary”, and accordingly, I, Vajreshvara, composed and spread this meditation manual at Kurab Tashi Gang. May glorious auspiciousness, experience and realisation blaze, and may they adorn the flourishing of the doctrine!

That was the thirty-first session.

SHUBHAM ASTU SARVA JAGATĀM IDAM

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This imperfect translation attempt was produced by Sherab Drime [Thomas Roth] in the Benchen Phuntsok Dargye Ling monastery in Svayambunāth, Kathmandu. Initially begun in August 2009, it was finished in January 2012 upon the insistent urging of Venerable Kyabje Tenga Rinpoche, for the benefit of students who were attending Rinpoche's teachings on the subject, and for future students who might wish to embark upon the path of Mahāmudrā.

It is solely through Kyabje Tenga Rinpoche's patient guidance on these teachings over many years that I was able to attempt this translation in the first place. I could, of course, continue to learn and practice these teachings and still not feel up to the task of releasing this translation effort. Still, I believe there comes a time when one should offer what one has produced to the scrutiny of one's fellow practitioners and translators. It is my sincere hope that at least a little benefit will come of this.

Acknowledgements

Thus, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Venerable Kyabje Tenga Rinpoche's kindness and patience, and offer this work with sincere prayers for his good health and long life. All and any remaining mistakes and unclear points are entirely due to my own lack of understanding. May the ḍākinīs and dharma protectors be forbearing.

Addendum

Shortly after the Spring Course in 2012, during which this text was distributed to participants, Venerable Kyabje Tenga Rinpoche, the sun of this world (at least my world that is), the source of all happiness and inspiration, passed into Parinirvāṇa. My above wishes for his good health and long life, therefore, seem somewhat obsolete. For this reason, I now offer this feeble and flawed translation attempt with my wishes for Rinpoche's speedy return to this world. May he live a hundred years, free of any sickness whatsoever, and may he continue to dispel the darkness of ignorance of us old disciples, and of future generations of students to come.

*Gelong Karma Sherab Drime,
Kathmandu, February 2013*

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