

THE GANGES: AN EXPERIENTIAL
PITH INSTRUCTION ON MAHĀMUDRĀ

In the language of India: *Mahāmudropadeśam*
In the language of Tibet: *Chaggya Chenpö Menngak*

Homage to glorious coemergence!

Intelligent Nāropa, forbearing of suffering, you undertake hardships and respect the guru. Thus, though *mahāmudrā* cannot be explained, hold this in your heart, fortunate one.

O! Look closely at worldly phenomena! Unable to last, they are like dreams and illusions, which, in fact, are non-existent. That being so, having given rise to disenchantment, drop worldly activities.

Having cut all connection with attachment and aversion, the domain of samsara, cultivate practice alone in mountain and forest wilds. Remain in a state of non-meditation. When you've attained that which is without attainment, *mahāmudrā* has been attained.

Worldly affairs are meaningless causes of ill-being. As actions performed are without essence, look at the actual, true essence.

The meaning that transcends rational mind will not be perceived through the phenomena of dualistic mind. The fact of non-action will not be reached through actions performed. If you want to attain the meaning of non-action transcending mind, seek out your own mind and nakedly place it in *rigpa*.

Put the sullied water of thoughts into its natural clarity. Without blocking or producing appearances, leave them as they are. When there is nothing to be rejected or adopted, mind is released into *mahāmudrā*.

If the root of a tree with lush branches, leaves and petals is cut, its ten thousand branches and hundred thousand leaves wither.

Even the darkness amassed over a thousand *kalpas* is dispelled by a single lamp. Likewise, an instant of your own mind's luminosity dispels without exception all the negativity and obscuration amassed throughout *kalpas*.

When persons of lesser intelligence cannot abide within the meaning, they should ascertain awareness through holding the key point of breath. With manifold gazes and means of mental focus, they should fine tune until they abide in the state of *rigpa*.

If you survey the center of the sky, grasping at center and outer edge ceases. Likewise, when you examine mind with the mind, the multitude of thoughts ceases and you see mind's nature.

When vapors from the earth and clouds disperse into the sky, though they have gone nowhere at all, they yet abide nowhere. So it is with the multitude of thoughts arisen from mind: by seeing your own mind, the waves of thoughts vaporize.

Space transcends color or form. It is immutable—unstained by black or white. Likewise, your own mind, beyond color or form, is untainted by the black and white phenomena of evil and virtue.

The core of the clear and pure sun cannot be veiled by the darkness of a thousand *kalpas*. Likewise, *kalpas* in cyclic existence cannot obscure the luminosity that is your own mind's essence.

Although space has been labeled “empty,” space itself is inexpressible as such. Likewise, though your own mind is said to be “luminosity,” there is no referent similarly established through expressions.

Within space, what is supported by what? *Mahāmudrā*, your own mind, is similarly unsupported. Leave it loose in its unaltered, innate state. Once you have loosened the bonds, there is no doubt of release.

In that way, the nature of mind is like space. There is no phenomenon not included therein.

Give up physical activity altogether and sit idly. Without much verbal expression, speech is like an echo. Not pondering things in the mind, look at resolved truth.

As the body has no substantial essence, it is like a bamboo reed. The mind, like the center of space, is beyond being an object of thought. Leave it loose in that state without releasing or placing. When mind has no focal point, that is *mahāmudrā*. By habituating that, unsurpassed enlightenment will be attained.

Without an object of reference, the mind's nature is clear. Without a path to traverse, the buddhas' path is entered. By habituating non-meditation, unsurpassed enlightenment will be attained.

To transcend all grasped-at objects and grasping mind is the king of views. When there is no straying, that is the king of meditations. When there is no deliberate effort, that is the king of conduct. When there is neither expectation nor apprehension, the fruition is made manifest.

The unborn, underlying basis is clear of propensities' obscuring veil. Avoiding equipoise and post-attainment, rest in the unborn essence. When appearances are recognized as self-projections, the phenomena of dualistic mind are spent.²⁴

When extremes are completely undone, that is the supreme king of views. Freedom from any extreme, deep and vast, is the supreme king of meditations. Self-abiding freedom from occupation is the supreme king of conduct. Self-abiding freedom from expectation is the supreme king of fruitions.

To a beginner, mind is like water falling down a gorge. In the middle, it flows gently, like the River Ganges. At the end, like tributaries' [confluence with the ocean], is the meeting of mother and son.

The luminosity that is *mahāmudrā* will not be perceived through the teachings of mantra proponents or *pāramitā* proponents, the *vinaya* collections and the like or even through their respective scriptures and tenet systems.

When you do nothing in the mind and are free of all wants, thoughts are like self-arisen, self-subsiding ripples of water. Obscured by the arising of want, luminosity is unperceived.

Vows observed conceptually deviate from the meaning of *samaya*. When you pay no mind to the non-abiding meaning that is without reference, the unimpaired *samaya* is a lamp in darkness.

When you are free of all wants and not dwelling in extremes, you will perceive all the teachings of the scripture collections without exception. If you dedicate yourself to this fact, you will be freed from samsara's prison. Equipoise upon this fact burns away ignorance, negativity and obscurations. Thus, it is described as a lamp of the teachings.

Foolish persons, disinterested in this fact, are spent, forever carried off by the great river of cyclic existence. How worthy of compassion are they, enduring evil destinies' unbearable miseries!

If you want release from ill-being, you should attend a masterful guru. His blessing having entered, your own mind will become liberated.

If you consort with the action *mudrā*, bliss-emptiness wisdom will arise. Thus, enter into equilibrium, the blessing of method and knowledge! [The pure essence] should be gently brought down, retained, reversed, drawn up, conveyed to its abode and made to pervade the body. When you're free of clinging to that, bliss-emptiness wisdom will arise.

Attaining longevity without graying hair and waxing like the moon, you'll have clear radiance and strength like that of a lion. The common accomplishments will be swiftly gained and you will arrive at the supreme.

May this crucial advice on *mahāmudrā* abide in fortunate wayfarers' hearts!

These words were spoken to Nāropa by Lord Tailopa on the banks of the River Ganges. MANGALAM.

The *Mahāmudropadesam* was spoken by Mahāsiddha Tilopa (988-1069) to Great Pandit Nāropa (c. 1012-1100). Later, at Pullahari in the north, Nāropa transmitted it to and recorded it in Sanskrit language with his disciple and lineage holder, Marpa Chökyi Lodrö, who translated it into Tibetan.

In the present time, there exist numerous Tibetan versions of the text, which consist mostly of the same words in various configurations. This edition accords with the Tibetan text transmitted by Dri-gung Kyabjé Garchen Triptrül Rinpoché. At his request and with his clarifying commentary, it has been translated into English without any reference to original Indic texts by the disciple Ari-ma.

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^{ri} The words of this line have been supplemented with commentary by Garchen Rinpoché.