

Tilopa's Mahamudra Upadesha

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Mahamudra Upadesha

Tilopa

From : Shenpen Osel

(The Clear Light of the Buddha's Teachings Which Benefits All Beings)

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[SEVEN TOPICS:]

[1. THE VIEW / THE GROUND]

Although mahamudra cannot be taught, intelligent and patient Naropa, tolerant of suffering, who is engaged in austerity and is devoted to the guru, fortunate one, do this with your mind.

[THE SIX ANALOGIES]

For example, in space (1) what is resting on what?

In one's mind, mahamudra, there is nothing to be shown.

Rest relaxed in the natural state without attempting to alter anything.

For example, it is like looking in the middle of the sky (2) and not seeing anything. In the same way, when your mind looks at your mind, thoughts stop and you attain unsurpassable awakening. If this fetter or bondage of thought is loosened, there is no doubt that you will be liberated.

For example, just as the vapor that, arising from the earth, becomes clouds (3) and dissolves into the expanse of space, not going anywhere else and yet not continuing to abide anywhere, in the same way the agitation of the thoughts that arise from the mind and within the mind is calmed the instant you see the mind's nature.

For example, just as the nature of space (4) transcends color and shape, and just as space is therefore unaffected or unchanged and unobscured by the various colors and shapes that occur within it, in the same way the essence of your mind transcends color and shape, and, therefore, is never obscured or affected by the various colors and shapes of virtue and wrongdoing.

For example, it is like the luminous heart of the sun (5), which could never be obscured even by the darkness of a thousand eons. In that way, that luminous clarity, that is the essence of the mind, is never obscured by the samsara of innumerable kalpas.

For example, just as we apply the term empty to space (6), in fact, there is nothing within space that we are accurately describing by that term. In the same way, although we call the mind clear light or luminosity, simply calling it so does not make it true that there is actually anything within the mind that is a true basis for that designation.

In that way the nature of the mind has from the beginning been like space, and there are no dharmas that are not included within that.

[2. THE CONDUCT: BODY, SPEECH AND MIND]

Abandoning all physical actions, the practitioner should rest at ease.

Without any verbal utterance, your speech becomes like an echo, sound inseparable from emptiness.

Think of nothing whatsoever with the mind and look at the dharmas of the leap.

[3. THE MEDITATION - FAMILIARIZATION WITH THE VIEW - SIMPLY LOOKING DIRECTLY AT THE NATURE

OF YOUR MIND AND AT THE NATURE OF WHATEVER ARISES IN YOUR MIND]

The body is without meaning, empty like a bamboo stalk.

The mind is like the midst of space. It is inconceivable.

Rest relaxed within that, without letting it go or placing it.

Rest relaxed in that state without sending it out, or placing it in, letting it go or attempting to place it.

. . . [If mind has no direction, it is mahamudra.] . . . with this you will attain unsurpassable awakening.

[4. THE SAMAYA - COMMITMENT - TO RECOGNIZE YOUR MIND'S NATURE]

Those who follow tantra and the vehicle of the paramitas, the vinaya, the sutras, and the various teachings of the Buddha with an attachment for their individual textual traditions and their individual philosophy will not come to see luminous mahamudra, because the seeing of that luminosity or clear light is obscured by their intention and attitude.

The conceptualized maintenance of vows actually causes you to impair the meaning of samaya. Without mental directedness or mental activity, be free of all intentionality. Thoughts are self-arisen and self-pacified like designs on the surface of water. If you do not pass beyond the meaning which is not abiding and not conceptualizing or focusing, then through not passing beyond that, you do not pass beyond or transgress samaya. This is the torch which dispels all obscurity or darkness.

[5. THE BENEFIT OF MAHAMUDRA PRACTICE]

If, free of all intention, you do not abide in extremes, you will see without exception the meaning of all the Buddha's teachings or of all the takas, the sections of the Buddha's teachings.

If you rest in this you will be liberated from the prison of samsara.

If you rest evenly within this, all of your wrongdoing and obscurations will be burned.

This is called for those reasons the torch of the doctrine.

[6. THE DEFECT OF NOT PRACTICING MAHAMUDRA]

Foolish people who have no interest in this will only be continually carried off by the

river of samsara. Those foolish people experiencing intolerable sufferings in lower states of existence are worthy of compassion.

[7. THE MAIN PRACTICE OF MAHAMUDRA]

[a. the preliminaries]

Wishing to attain liberation from intolerable suffering, rely upon a wise guru.
When the guru's blessings enter your heart, your mind will be liberated.

Kye ho!

These things of samsara are meaningless or pointless, the causes of suffering. And since all of these things that have been done or made are pointless, look at that which is meaningful.

[b. the main practice of mahamudra]

[SUMMARY: FROM A BEGINNER'S POINT OF VIEW]

If you are beyond all grasping at an object and grasping at a subject, that is the monarch of all views.

If there is no distraction, that is the monarch among all meditations.

If there is no effort, that is the monarch among all conducts.

When there is no hope and no fear, that is the final result, and the fruition has been attained or revealed.

It is beyond being an object of conceptual focus, and the mind's nature is lucidity.

There is no path to be traversed and yet, in that way you enter the path to buddhahood.

There is no object of meditation, but if you become accustomed to this you will attain unsurpassable awakening.

[THE IMPORTANCE OR VIRTUES OF PRACTICE IN SOLITUDE OR ISOLATION]

Thoroughly examine mundane things or the things of the world. If you do you will see that none of them persist, none of them are capable of permanence, and in that sense, they are all like dreams and magical illusions. Dreams and magical illusions are meaningless.

Therefore, generate renunciation and give up mundane concerns.

Cut through the bonds of attachment and aversion toward those around you and your surroundings and meditate in isolated retreats, forests, and so forth, living alone.

Remain in that state without meditation.

When you attain that which is without attainment you have attained mahamudra.

[THE BENEFITS OF THE PRACTICE OF MAHAMUDRA]

For example, if the single root of a tree with a trunk and many branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit, is cut, the ten thousand or one hundred thousand branches will automatically die. In the same way, if the root of mind is cut through, the branches and leaves of samsara will dry up.

For example, just as the darkness that has accumulated over a thousand eons is dispelled by the illumination of one lamp or one torch, in the same way, one instant of the wisdom of the clear light of one's mind dispels all of the ignorance, wrongdoing, and obscurations accumulated throughout numerous eons.

[SEEKING THE NATURE OF THE VERY SUBTLE MIND BEYOND ALL EXTREMES]

The intellect cannot see that which is beyond conceptual mind, and you will never realize that which is uncreated through created dharmas.

If you wish to attain or realize that which is beyond the intellect and is uncreated, then scrutinize your mind and strip awareness naked.

[THE MIDDLE WAY: NOT ACCEPTING, NOT REJECTING]

Allow the cloudy water of thought to clarify itself or to clear itself.

Do not attempt to stop or create appearances. Leave them as they are.

If you are without acceptance and rejection of external appearances, all that appears and exists will be liberated as mudra.

[NO REAL ORIGATION, NO REAL DURATION, NO REAL CESSATION

-- ALL DHARMAS ARE EMPTY - THE INSEPARABILITY OF APPEARANCE AND EMPTINESS]

The all-basis is unborn, and within that unborn all-basis, abandon or relinquish habits, wrongdoing, and obscurations.

Therefore, do not fixate or reckon.

Rest in the essence of the unborn or in the unborn nature.

In that state, appearances are fully apparent; but within that experience of vivid appearances allow concepts to be exhausted or to dissolve.

[SUMMARY: Here he is summarizing these four from the point of view of the culmination of the path or the fruition.]

Complete liberation from all conceptual extremes is the supreme monarch of views.

Boundless vastness is the supreme monarch of meditations.

Being directionless and utterly impartial is the supreme monarch of conduct.

Self-liberation beyond expectation or hope is the supreme result or fruition.

[THE EXPERIENCES OF PRACTITIONERS OF THE THREE LEVELS.]

[For] a beginner [mind] is like a river with a fast current running through a narrow bed or a narrow defile.

In the middle or after that, it becomes like the gentle current of the River Ganges.

In the end, it is like the flowing of all rivers into the mother ocean, or it is like the meeting of mother and child of all the rivers.

[METHODS FOR BEGINNERS]

Those of little intelligence, if they find they cannot remain in that state, may apply or hold the technique of the breathing and emphasize the essence of awareness, and through many techniques or branches such as gaze and holding the mind, tighten awareness until it stays put, exerting tension or effort until awareness comes to rest in that state or in its nature.

[ADVANCED SUPPLEMENTARY TECHNIQUE: called karmamudra or the action seal, as with tummo [Tibetan] as found for example in the Six Dharmas of Naropa]

If you rely upon karmamudra, the wisdom of bliss and emptiness will arise. Enter into union having consecrated the upaya or method and the prajna or knowledge.

Slowly let it fall or send it down, coil it, turn it back, and lead it to its proper place.

Finally spread it or cause it to pervade your whole body.

If there is no attachment or craving, the wisdom of bliss and emptiness will appear.

[THE RESULT OR BENEFICE OF PRACTICING MAHAMUDRA]

You will possess longevity without white hair and you will be as healthy as the waxing moon.
Your complexion will be lustrous and you will be as powerful as a lion.
You will quickly attain the common siddhis or attainments, and you will come to alight in or
attain the supreme siddhi as well.

[AN ASPIRATION]

These instructions of the essential point of mahamudra, may they abide in the hearts of
worthy or fortunate beings.

[THE COLOPHON]

This was bestowed on the banks of the River Ganges by the Great and Glorious Siddha Tilopa,
who had realized mahamudra, upon the Kashmiri pandit who was both learned and realized,
Naropa, after Naropa had engaged in twelve hardships or austerities.

[THE DERIVATION OF THE TIBETAN TEXT]

This was translated and written down at Pullahari in the north by the great Naropa and the
great Tibetan translator, the king among translators, Marpa Chokyi Lodro.

[End]