

*Clear Light
of Bliss*

Also by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso

Meaningful to Behold
Universal Compassion
Joyful Path of Good Fortune
The Bodhisattva Vow
Heart Jewel
Great Treasury of Merit
Introduction to Buddhism
Tantric Grounds and Paths
Ocean of Nectar
Essence of Vajrayana
Living Meaningfully, Dying Joyfully
Eight Steps to Happiness
Transform Your Life
The New Meditation Handbook
How to Solve Our Human Problems
Mahamudra Tantra
Modern Buddhism
The New Heart of Wisdom
The New Guide to Dakini Land
How to Understand the Mind

Profits from the sale of this book are designated to the
NKT-IKBU International Temples Project Fund
according to the guidelines in *A Money Handbook*
[Reg. Charity number 1015054 (England)]
A Buddhist Charity, Building for World Peace
www.kadampa.org/temples

GESHE KELSANG GYATSO

*Clear Light
of Bliss*

TANTRIC MEDITATION MANUAL



THARPA PUBLICATIONS

UK • US • CANADA
AUSTRALIA • ASIA

First published in 1982 by Wisdom Publications
Second edition totally reset and revised 1992
Reprinted 1995, 2002
Third edition reset and revised 2014

The right of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means except for the quotation of brief passages for the purpose of private study, research, or review.

Tharpa Publications UK
Conishead Priory
Ulverston, Cumbria
LA12 9QQ, England

Tharpa Publications US
47 Sweeney Road
Glen Spey, NY 12737
USA

There are Tharpa Publications offices around the world, and Tharpa books are published in most major languages. See page 325 for contact details.

© New Kadampa Tradition – International Kadampa Buddhist Union 1982, 1992, 2014

The cover image is of Conqueror Vajradhara.
Line illustrations are of the Mahamudra Lineage Gurus.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014939469

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-910368-03-9 – paperback
ISBN 978-1-910368-04-6 – ePub
ISBN 978-1-910368-05-3 – kindle

Set in Palatino by Tharpa Publications
Printed by CPI William Clowes,
Beccles, NR34 7TL, England

Paper supplied from well-managed forests and other controlled sources, and certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council.

Contents

Illustrations	vi
Foreword	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Preface	x
Introduction and Preliminaries	1
Channels, Winds and Drops	17
Inner Fire	35
Clear Light and the Four Joys	75
The Nine Mixings and the Two Mudras	113
Introduction to the Nature of the Mind	145
Tranquil Abiding	163
Meditation on Emptiness	187
Illusory Body	205
Clear Light and Union	227
Resultant Mahamudra	239
Dedication	255
Appendix I – The Condensed Meaning of the Text	257
Appendix II – Sadhanas	267
<i>Liberating Prayer</i>	269
<i>Prayers of Request to the Mahamudra Lineage Gurus</i>	271
<i>The Yoga of Buddha Heruka</i>	281
Appendix III – The Visualized Letters	297
Glossary	299
Bibliography	315
Study Programmes of Kadampa Buddhism	320
Tharpa Offices Worldwide	325
Index	327

Illustrations

Vajradhara	xii
Manjushri	8
Je Tsongkhapa	16
Togden Jampel Gyatso	24
Baso Chokyi Gyaltsen	36
Drubchen Dharmavajra	42
Gyalwa Ensapa	50
Khedrub Sangye Yeshe	60
Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen	76
Drubchen Gendun Gyaltsen	86
Drungpa Tsondru Gyaltsen	100
Konchog Gyaltsen	114
Panchen Losang Yeshe	126
Losang Trinlay	146
Drubwang Losang Namgyal	154
Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen	164
Phurchog Ngawang Jampa	170
Panchen Palden Yeshe	176
Khedrub Ngawang Dorje	182
Ngulchu Dharmabhadra	196
Yangchen Drubpay Dorje	206
Khedrub Tenzin Tsondru	218
Je Phabongkhapa Trinlay Gyatso	230
Dorjechang Trijang Rinpoche Losang Yeshe	240
Dorjechang Kelsang Gyatso Rinpoche (<i>included at the request of faithful disciples</i>)	248
Tantric commitment objects	282



YONGZIN LINGTSANG

Foreword

OM Bliss and Excellence

With great respect and devotion I rely upon Losang
Dragpa,
Who alone is the precious eyes for countless migrators,
A manifestation of the wisdom of countless omniscient
Buddhas,
And holder of three immaculate sets of vows.

This excellent commentary on the joyous Mahamudra
Derived from churning the essence of the ocean of Tantric
scriptures

That arose from the heart of this most precious Spiritual
Guide

Is published with a pure wish to benefit migrators.

Through its publication may all three worlds be beautified
By the infinite benefits of happiness that arise
From the excellent, impeccable teachings and practices of
Losang Dragpa,

Whose treasure-like tradition of the Conqueror resembles a wish-granting jewel.

May all the beings and communities following
Buddhadharma remain for a long time, and increase in
their activities,

May all Sangha members maintain pure discipline and
increase their beneficial actions,

May all sickness, war, famine and afflictions be pacified,
And may everyone in this world enjoy happiness, joy and
good fortune.

Throughout all their lives, may all beings throughout space
Never be separated from precious Spiritual Guides.

Like a waxing moon, may everything excellent increase in
accordance with Dharma,

And may everyone swiftly attain the ultimate
enlightenment of Vajradhara.

I am very happy to learn that Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso has given extensive teachings on Secret Mantra based on Protector Manjushri Je Tsongkhapa's great treatises and on other authentic commentaries on Mahamudra, including the first Panchen Lama's root text.

May these teachings, originally given at Manjushri Centre in England and now made available in this book, *Clear Light of Bliss*, be a source of great happiness and immeasurable benefit to all human beings of this world.

May virtue and excellence increase.

Yongdzin Ling Rinpoche

Acknowledgements

In 1980, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso Rinpoche gave an extensive commentary to Vajrayana Mahamudra to the fortunate students of Manjushri Kadampa Meditation Centre in Ulverston, England. We pray that through studying these nectar-like instructions and attempting to put them into practice sincerely, we can in some small way begin to repay the immeasurable kindness of our most precious Spiritual Guide and Vajrayana Spiritual Guide.

Not satisfied merely with giving the teaching, out of his immeasurable kindness Geshe Kelsang then worked closely with his translator and a team of editors to prepare the transcript for publication under the title, *Clear Light of Bliss*. For this incomparable book, the like of which has never before been seen in this world, we offer heartfelt thanks to the author.

We also thank all the dedicated, senior Dharma students who assisted the author with the rendering of the English and who prepared the final manuscript for publication.

*Roy Tyson,
Administrative Director,
Manjushri Kadampa Meditation Centre,
May 1992.*

Preface

I have written this book primarily for the benefit of Western Dharma practitioners with the hope that indirectly it will prove beneficial for all living beings.

As for how it was composed, I have based it on the slight experience I have gained through the kindness of my holy Spiritual Guide from whom I received instructions on the generation stage and completion stage of Secret Mantra. In addition, I have drawn material from Je Tsongkhapa's *Lamp Thoroughly Illuminating the Five Stages*, which contains the quintessence of Je Tsongkhapa's Tantric teachings, and also from Je Tsongkhapa's commentary to the Six Yogas of Naropa. I have also consulted the first Panchen Lama's root text on the Mahamudra, *The Main Path of the Conquerors*, and his autocommentary, *Lamp of Re-illumination*, as well as the Mahamudra texts of Kachen Yeshe Gyaltzen and Keutsang, and many other authentic works on Secret Mantra. Because I have incorporated the teachings of such great Masters, there is some reason to hope that this present book will be of considerable benefit.

To attain pure realizations of Mahamudra, it is not sufficient merely to read these instructions. First we must train in the stages of the path common to both Sutra and Tantra by relying upon texts such as *Joyful Path of Good Fortune*, and practise the various preliminaries so as to remove obstacles and accumulate merit. When we have some experience of renunciation, bodhichitta, and wisdom realizing emptiness, we should receive a Highest Yoga Tantra

empowerment from a qualified Vajrayana Spiritual Guide and then strive to keep our vows and commitments purely. We should then train in generation stage practices and, once we have some experience of these, we should request a qualified Vajra Spiritual Guide to give us instructions on Vajrayana Mahamudra. If we then put these instructions into practice with faith and wisdom, we will definitely attain the realization of the Union of Mahamudra.

The importance of engaging in these preparatory practices and of cultivating an impeccable motivation before attempting to practise Vajrayana Mahamudra has been stressed by the great Masters of all traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. It is most important that we do not engage in these practices with an impure motivation, wishing for personal gain, a good reputation, or the like, because, as Conqueror Vajradhara warned in the Tantras, the consequences of such actions will only be suffering, such as illness, a short life, mental obscurations, and rebirth in the lower realms. Therefore, from the outset we should cultivate a pure motivation of bodhichitta and engage in the practices of Vajrayana Mahamudra with the intention to become a Buddha for the benefit of all living beings.

*Geshe Kelsang Gyatso,
Manjushri Kadampa Meditation Centre,
1982.*



Vajradhara

Introduction and Preliminaries

It is very pleasing to have this opportunity to explain the method for practising Vajrayana Mahamudra according to the Mahayana tradition. This explanation will be given under three main headings:

- 1 An introduction to the general paths
- 2 The source of the lineage from which these instructions are derived
- 3 The actual explanation of the instructions possessing this lineage

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PATHS

In *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* Shantideva says:

By depending upon this boat-like human form,
We can cross the great ocean of suffering.
Since such a vessel will be hard to find again,
This is no time to sleep, you fool!

Samsara is like a vast ocean, for just as an ocean gives rise to waves, so rebirth in samsara gives rise to suffering. At the moment we have a precious human body, which is the best vessel for crossing this perilous ocean of samsara. If we were to waste this precious life without taking full advantage of it, we would be extremely foolish. We would be like the adventurer who had to wait a long time to find a boat that would take him to a treasure island but who, having finally

found one, fell asleep instead of taking immediate advantage of it. How foolish he felt when he awoke to discover that the long-awaited vessel had been washed away and that he was still without a means of travelling to the island! Similarly, at this time we have found a boat-like human body that can transport us to the island of full enlightenment, or Buddhahood. If, instead of taking advantage of this body, we were to waste it on the meaningless activities of this life, that would be most tragic. It will not be easy to find another opportunity like this in the future.

The highest of all possible human goals is the attainment of complete enlightenment, an ultimate state of peace in which all obstacles obscuring the mind have been removed and all good qualities such as wisdom, compassion, and skilful means have been fully developed. However, we cannot reach this ultimate goal merely by waiting for it; we need to use the appropriate methods to take us there.

What are the methods for attaining the peace of full enlightenment? They are the paths of Sutra and Secret Mantra; there is no third method. Of these two, the techniques revealed in Secret Mantra are superior to those revealed in the Sutras. Not only is Secret Mantra the supreme path to full enlightenment, it is also extremely rare. As Je Tsongkhapa said, the teachings of Secret Mantra are even rarer than the Buddhas because, although a thousand founding Buddhas will appear during this Fortunate Aeon, only the fourth (Buddha Shakyamuni), the eleventh, and the last will teach the paths of Secret Mantra.

At the moment, we have a great opportunity to practise these rare and beneficial teachings, so it is important that we develop a strong intention to practise them purely. If the Mahayana teachings were to vanish from this world, we would have no opportunity to become a Buddha. Therefore, while we still have access to these precious teachings, we should apply ourself to them assiduously and try to gain some experience of them.

The etymology of Secret Mantra is as follows. 'Secret' indicates that these methods should be practised discreetly. If we make a display of our practices, we will attract many hindrances and negative forces. This would be like someone talking openly and carelessly about a precious jewel they possessed and, as a result, attracting the attention of thieves. 'Mantra' means 'protection for the mind'. The function of Secret Mantra is to enable us to progress swiftly through the stages of the spiritual path by protecting our mind against ordinary appearances and ordinary conceptions.

The Secret Mantra practices and scriptures are also called the 'Vajrayana', in which 'vajra' means 'indestructible' and 'yana' means 'vehicle'. In this context, 'vajra' refers to the indivisibility of method and wisdom, where method is spontaneous great bliss and wisdom is the unmistakable understanding of emptiness. Method is the cause of the Form Body of a Buddha and wisdom is the cause of the Truth Body. The union of method and wisdom that is the union of spontaneous great bliss and emptiness is unique to Secret Mantra, and is the quickest way to attain the two bodies of a Buddha.

Je Tsongkhapa explained that an authentic Secret Mantra practice must possess four attributes, known as the 'four complete purities'. These are: complete purity of place, complete purity of body, complete purity of enjoyments, and complete purity of deeds. The practice of these four complete purities was not revealed in the Sutra teachings, but is to be found only in Secret Mantra. Secret Mantra is distinguished from Sutra by the practice of bringing the future result into the present path. For example, even though we have not yet attained enlightenment, when we practise Secret Mantra we try to prevent ordinary appearances and ordinary conceptions of our environment and instead visualize our surroundings as the mandala of a Deity. In the same way, we prevent ordinary appearance

of our body, our enjoyments, and our deeds, and, in their place, generate ourself as a Deity, visualize our enjoyments as those of a Buddha, and practise performing enlightened deeds. By doing such practices, we can attain the resultant state of Buddhahood very rapidly. These four practices are essential for both the generation stage and completion stage of Secret Mantra and thus they form the foundation for the teachings presented in this book, such as the instructions on inner fire (Tib. tummo).

Secret Mantra has four levels: Action Tantra, Performance Tantra, Yoga Tantra, and Highest Yoga Tantra. Action Tantra principally emphasizes external actions, Performance Tantra places equal emphasis on both external and internal actions, Yoga Tantra principally emphasizes internal actions, and Highest Yoga Tantra is the supreme class of Tantra.

All four levels of Secret Mantra transform great bliss into the spiritual path, but the methods of transformation differ according to the level being practised. In Action Tantra, the meditator generates bliss by looking at a visualized goddess, and then transforms that bliss into the path. In Performance Tantra, the meditator generates bliss by exchanging smiles with the goddess, and in Yoga Tantra, by holding hands with her and so forth. In Highest Yoga Tantra, the meditator generates bliss by imagining sexual embrace with a consort and, at advanced stages, by engaging in actual embrace; and then transforms that bliss into the spiritual path. It should be noted, however, that it is very difficult to use great bliss as a method for attaining enlightenment, and if we are able to do so we have indeed attained a formidable accomplishment. As the great Mahasiddha Saraha said, 'Everyone is excited by copulation, but very few can transform that bliss into the spiritual path.'

Generally, Buddhism teaches that attachment is a delusion that is to be avoided, and eventually abandoned, but in Secret Mantra there is a method for transforming

attachment into the path. However, to practise this method we must be very skilful. In this practice, we use attachment to generate great bliss and then use that mind of great bliss to meditate on emptiness. Only if we can do this is it a transformation of attachment. Attachment itself cannot be used directly as a path because it is a delusion, and even in Secret Mantra it is finally to be abandoned. In authentic Secret Mantra practice, the bliss generated from attachment meditates on emptiness and thereby overcomes all the delusions, including attachment itself. This is similar to the way in which the fire produced from rubbing two pieces of wood together eventually consumes the wood from which it arose.

For those who are unskilful, or whose minds are untrained, such practices of transformation are impossible. For this reason, the Yogis and great meditators of the past have said that to attain the realizations of Secret Mantra, one's mind should first be controlled by training in the Sutra stages of the path. Without building this firm foundation, there is absolutely no way to attain a pure experience of Secret Mantra.

Revealing these instructions of Secret Mantra can be dangerous for both the Spiritual Guide and the disciple, if either is not properly qualified. At the very least, they should both have an appropriate motivation. A Teacher should reveal these methods only out of the great compassionate intention to spread the holy Dharma for the benefit of others. To reveal these methods out of attachment to the happiness of this life – wishing to achieve fame, gifts, and so forth – would be a cause for taking rebirth in the deepest hell.

It would also be dangerous for the disciple to receive the empowerments and instructions of Secret Mantra if he or she did not strive to keep the vows and commitments; wished only an increase in reputation, possessions, and so forth; or merely desired to collect information for academic purposes.

Any of these, or similar worldly motivations, would result in nothing but future suffering.

It is very important, therefore, that both the Spiritual Guide and the disciple have controlled minds and an impeccable motivation. Even though we may call ourselves a Buddhist and take refuge in the Three Jewels every day, these alone are insufficient qualifications for the practice of Secret Mantra. We also need to generate the highest of all motivations – the precious mind of bodhichitta – and dedicate ourselves solely to benefiting others. Therefore, whenever we meditate on Secret Mantra, we should begin by generating bodhichitta while reciting the following prayer:

*For the sake of all sentient beings
I will drink the nectar of this instruction
So that I may attain Buddhahood within this life
Through the profound path of Secret Mantra.*

There now follows an introduction to Mahamudra in general and to this text in particular. Mahamudra is a Sanskrit term composed of two parts: ‘maha’ meaning ‘great’ and ‘mudra’ meaning ‘seal’. In the Sutra Mahamudra system, great seal refers to emptiness. In *King of Concentration Sutra* Buddha says:

The nature of all phenomena is the great seal.

Here, ‘nature’ refers to the ultimate nature of all phenomena, which is their emptiness, or lack of inherent existence. This emptiness is called the ‘great seal’ because phenomena never move from the state of lacking inherent existence. In general, all Buddhists assert four views:

- (1) All products are impermanent
- (2) All contaminated things are the nature of suffering
- (3) All phenomena are selfless
- (4) Only nirvana is peace

Because these views are irrefutable, they are called the 'four seals'. Of these, the third is known as the 'great seal'. Since emptiness is the nature of all phenomena, it is called a 'seal', and since a direct realization of emptiness enables us to accomplish the great purpose – complete liberation from the sufferings of samsara – it is also called 'great'.

In the present text, Mahamudra meditation is explained not according to the Sutra system but according to the completion stage of Highest Yoga Tantra. In this system 'great' refers to spontaneous great bliss and 'seal' refers to emptiness. Therefore, in Secret Mantra, Mahamudra is the union of spontaneous great bliss and emptiness.

According to Secret Mantra, Mahamudra is divided into two stages: causal-time Mahamudra and resultant-time Mahamudra. Causal-time is the time spent on the path leading to full enlightenment, and so causal-time Mahamudra is the Mahamudra practised prior to the attainment of Buddhahood. Resultant-time Mahamudra is the Union of No More Learning, which is the actual state of Buddhahood.

Causal-time Mahamudra is divided into two successive stages: the Mahamudra that is the union of spontaneous great bliss and emptiness, and the Mahamudra that is the union of the two truths. The first union occurs when the subjective mind of spontaneous great bliss realizes emptiness as its object. The object, emptiness, is the same in both Sutra and Secret Mantra; what differs is the mind realizing this emptiness. It is the subjective mind of spontaneous great bliss that makes Secret Mantra meditation superior to Sutra meditation. Realizing emptiness with the mind of spontaneous great bliss is the quickest method for attaining full enlightenment.

It should be noted that the spontaneous great bliss of the completion stage of Secret Mantra is not the same as ordinary pleasure experienced at the height of sexual



Manjushri

embrace. Spontaneous great bliss is experienced only when, through the force of meditation, we cause the winds to enter, abide, and dissolve within the central channel and, as a result, the white drop melts and flows through the central channel. Using spontaneous great bliss to realize emptiness was the essential heart practice of the great Secret Mantra Masters of ancient India, such as Saraha, Nagarjuna, Tilopa, Naropa and Maitripa; and of the great Tibetan Masters, such as Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa and Je Tsongkhapa. As in the past, so today – the Secret Mantra meditator’s supreme path to perfect enlightenment is the union of spontaneous great bliss and emptiness.

The second stage of causal-time Mahamudra is the Mahamudra that is the union of the two truths: the conventional and the ultimate. In this context, the pure illusory body is known as ‘conventional truth’ and meaning clear light as ‘ultimate truth’. Assembling these two truths simultaneously within one person’s continuum is known as the ‘Mahamudra that is the union of the two truths’. This Mahamudra is the ripened fruit of the Mahamudra that is the union of bliss and emptiness. Causal-time Mahamudra therefore contains both a cause and a result. Through the force of accomplishing this two-stage causal-time Mahamudra, we will attain the resultant-time Mahamudra, or actual Buddhahood possessing the seven pre-eminent qualities of embrace. This concludes the explanation of the general paths of Secret Mantra.

**THE SOURCE OF THE LINEAGE FROM WHICH THESE
INSTRUCTIONS ARE DERIVED**

All the meditations included within this present text come from Conqueror Vajradhara and the great Secret Mantra Masters of ancient India. These techniques were passed from the Indian Masters to the Tibetan Masters, and have been

handed down to the present-day Teachers in an unbroken lineage from Spiritual Father to Spiritual Son.

Although Mahamudra meditations were practised by the ancient Indian Masters, the particular system of Mahamudra presented here is a 'close' lineage transmitted by Conqueror Vajradhara to the Wisdom Buddha Manjushri, who in turn transmitted it directly to Je Tsongkhapa. Thus Je Tsongkhapa was the first human Master in this particular lineage.

The Gurus of the close lineage of Vajrayana Mahamudra are as follows:

Vajradhara
Manjushri
Je Tsongkhapa
Togden Jampel Gyatso
Baso Chokyi Gyaltsen
Drubchen Dharmavajra
Gyalwa Ensapa
Khedrub Sangye Yeshe
Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen
Drubchen Gendun Gyaltsen
Drungpa Tsonдру Gyaltsen
Konchog Gyaltsen
Panchen Losang Yeshe
Losang Trinlay
Drubwang Losang Namgyal
Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen
Phurchog Ngawang Jampa
Panchen Palden Yeshe
Khedrub Ngawang Dorje
Ngulchu Dharmabhadra
Yangchen Drubpay Dorje
Khedrub Tendzin Tsonдру
Je Phabongkhapa Trinlay Gyatso

Dorjechang Trijang Rinpoche Losang Yeshe
Dorjechang Kelsang Gyatso Rinpoche

In recent times, this lineage was held by Trinlay Gyatso, more widely known as Phabongkha Rinpoche, who was an emanation of the Tantric Deity Heruka. This great Lama was like the sun of Dharma, illuminating the hidden meaning of both Sutra and Secret Mantra. He passed the Mahamudra lineage to his heart Son, Dorjechang Trijang Rinpoche, and it is through the kindness and authority of this holy Spiritual Guide that this present text appears.

Prayers of Request to the Mahamudra Lineage Gurus can be found in Appendix II. If we are sincerely interested in studying and practising the meditations explained in this book, we should receive the blessings of the Mahamudra lineage Gurus by offering a mandala and reciting this prayer. Because successful practice depends to a large extent upon the blessings and inspiration of the Spiritual Guides, the wise student will not neglect this advice.

THE ACTUAL EXPLANATION OF THE INSTRUCTIONS POSSESSING THIS LINEAGE

These instructions are given under three headings:

- 1 The preliminary practices
- 2 The actual practice
- 3 The concluding stages

THE PRELIMINARY PRACTICES

To perform the practices of Mahamudra successfully, we must accomplish two sets of preliminaries:

- 1 The common preliminary practices
- 2 The uncommon preliminary practices

THE COMMON PRELIMINARY PRACTICES

These practices prepare us for the more advanced techniques of Secret Mantra. They purify the various obstacles and defilements of body, speech, and mind and thereby eliminate hindrances that would interfere with successful practice. They also serve to generate a store of positive energy, or merit, that will enable realizations of the more advanced practices to ripen in our mind.

This process of purifying and accumulating merit can be compared to the way in which a farmer prepares a field for cultivation, first removing the rocks and weeds that would obstruct growth and then nurturing the soil with water, fertilizer, and the like. Just as such preparations ensure a successful crop, so the proper practice of the preliminaries ensures successful Secret Mantra meditation.

There are four common preliminaries:

- 1 The guide of going for refuge and generating bodhichitta, the gateway to the Buddhadharma and the Mahayana.
- 2 The guide of mandala offerings, the gateway to accumulating a collection of merit.
- 3 The guide of meditation and recitation of Vajrasattva, the gateway to purifying negativities and downfalls.
- 4 The guide of Guru yoga, the gateway to receiving blessings.

If an explanation of these four were given here, this text would become too long. Those who are seriously interested in practising Mahamudra should consult authentic explanations of these practices, such as the one given in *The New Guide to Dakini Land*, and apply these instructions conscientiously.

THE UNCOMMON PRELIMINARY PRACTICES

As was mentioned earlier, there are two parts to Highest Yoga Tantra meditation: generation stage and completion stage. The techniques of Secret Mantra Mahamudra belong to completion stage. This is preceded by the various yogas of generation stage, which are the uncommon preliminaries. There is a generation stage practice associated with each Highest Yoga Tantra Deity. These are explained in detail in Je Tsongkhapa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path of Secret Mantra* and in Khedrubje's *Ocean of Attainments*.

There is more to the generation stage of Secret Mantra than merely generating oneself as a particular Deity. For a practice to be an actual generation stage practice, we must generate oneself as a Deity in conjunction with the yoga of bringing the three bodies into the path. If we wish to practise Secret Mantra Mahamudra, but cannot study the above-mentioned texts in which these yogas are extensively explained, we should at least receive brief instructions on generation stage from a qualified Tantric Master. To receive such instructions and put them into practice, we must first receive an appropriate Highest Yoga Tantra empowerment.

If, for example, we have received the empowerment of Heruka, we should practise the generation stage of Heruka Tantra before engaging in Mahamudra. If possible, we should try to practise the generation stage of Heruka according to the commentary, following a sadhana such as *The Yoga of Buddha Heruka*, which can be found in Appendix II. If this is not possible, we should at least try to practise according to the following extremely condensed method.

We begin by sitting on our meditation cushion and reciting three times:

*Eternally I shall go for refuge
To Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.*

*For the sake of all living beings
I shall become Heruka.*

Then we visualize:

All worlds and their beings melt into blue light, which then dissolves into me. My body gradually melts into light simultaneously from below and above, gradually becoming smaller and smaller until it dissolves into the blue letter HUM at my heart. The letter HUM then gradually dissolves from the bottom up into the nada. Finally, even the nada disappears, dissolving into clear light emptiness.

At this point we think strongly that our mind and Heruka's mind are indistinguishably mixed, like water mixed with water. We focus on this clear light Truth Body and generate divine pride by thinking:

This is me; I am the actual Truth Body Buddha Heruka.

This is the brief meditation on bringing death into the path to the Truth Body. It functions principally to prevent ordinary appearances, to purify ordinary death, to cause the ripening of the clear light of completion stage, and to sow the seed to accomplish the actual Truth Body of a Buddha.

Now we visualize:

From the state of emptiness of the Truth Body, my mind instantly transforms into a small beam of blue light, the height of a forearm, standing on a sun cushion in the centre of an eight-petalled lotus of various colours.

We think:

Now I have become the actual Enjoyment Body Buddha Heruka

and we develop the divine pride of being the Enjoyment Body. This is the brief meditation on bringing the intermediate state

into the path to the Enjoyment Body. It functions principally to purify ordinary intermediate state, to cause the ripening of the illusory body of the completion stage, and to sow the seed to accomplish the actual Enjoyment Body of a Buddha.

We continue:

Instantly my mind, in the form of a beam of blue light, transforms into Heruka, blue in colour with one face and two arms, holding a vajra and bell, and embracing Vajravarahi.

We think:

*Now I have become the actual Emanation Body Buddha
Heruka*

and we develop the divine pride of being the Emanation Body. This is the brief meditation on bringing rebirth into the path to the Emanation Body. It functions principally to purify ordinary rebirth, to cause the ripening of the completion stage practices of the mixings of the Emanation Body, and to sow the seed to accomplish a Buddha's actual Emanation Body. At this point, we can meditate on Heruka's body or we can recite his mantra. If we choose the latter, we focus on the letter HUM at our heart and visualize the mantra around it as we recite.

There is no shorter generation stage practice than this. We should attempt the following Mahamudra meditations only if we have, at the very least, previously performed this practice. If we have a different personal Deity, such as Vajrayogini or Yamantaka, we can still practise this condensed generation stage practice by making the appropriate changes with respect to the Deity, colours, implements, and so forth.

End of preview

*If you have enjoyed this sample, please order from tharpa.com
where all profits go to the International Temples Project,
an international charity building for world peace.*