

Stages of Mahāmudrā: A Message for Gompa Drakpa Dorje

Oṃ Svasti

I bow at the feet of the precious guru who is the treasury of everything good and the essence of the exalted body, speech, and mind of all buddhas throughout the three times. You are a sublime being with excellent accumulations. Initiated into the teachings of the Sage, you now view all the fruits of samsara's joy as being like a poisonous plant.

As your karmic imprints for devotion awoke, you filled the endless knot of your heart to the brim with the sublime elixir-like teachings of the Buddha. For the benefit of both yourself and others, you made practice your main focus, O sublime one.

You have faith in the exalted body, speech, and mind of the precious guru, our refuge, the nirmanakāya Protector of the World, untainted by a host of words and conceptual fabrications. You have not gone to the marketplace for milk!

When longing for the oral instructions of a sublime being, first recollect death and impermanence, and meditate on these with great sincerity. If this teaching does not take root in your mind, even if you are regarded as an excellent and sublime being, in truth you will only be focused on this world. And so, my sublime son, having utterly severed your conceptual fabrications as they relate to this world, I ask you to make practice your main focus.

When it comes time to practice, the foundation of the teachings of all buddhas throughout the three times is the higher training in disciplined conduct.

If you do not guard your disciplined conduct as you have promised and vowed, there will be no escape for yourself from the suffering of the lower realms. And you will have deceived all buddhas. Therefore, the higher training of disciplined conduct—which is virtuous in the beginning, middle, and end—should be guarded like your very own life and eyes.

Even though guarding disciplined conduct results in attaining the states of gods and humans, these are still within samsara, the ocean of suffering. If you do not recognize samsara as suffering, the wish to abandon it will never arise. So, give up admiration for samsara and accomplish liberation.

Tasting the flavor of the peace of liberation and nirvana for yourself alone without thinking about others is the way of śrāvakas and pratekyabuddhas. So, I request you to abandon these attitudes of the lower vehicles. Generate supreme bodhicitta with thoughts of love and compassion for all sentient beings of the six realms, and sincerely endeavor to practice the trainings of aspiration and engagement bodhicitta. After having generated supreme bodhicitta, take up the practice of the six perfections.

To attain perfect awakening by means of immeasurable hardships for three countless eons and so on is an extremely long and difficult path. Hence, buddhahood can be attained in this life through the Vajra Vehicle of Secret Mantra. This was taught by Vajradhara and this you should follow. In a secluded, delightful abode request the four empowerments, the precious path of ripening, from an authentic and sublime guru.

Having abandoned the faults and defects of your samayas, sit cross-legged on a comfortable seat in a very remote and secluded place. Having performed all the preliminary branches to meditative concentration, contemplate impermanence and samsara's defects. Train your mind in love, compassion, and bodhicitta and then practice the creation and completion stages. Although the creation and completion stages with characteristics are the cause for the two form kāyas, they will not bring about ultimate *dharmakāya*.

Hence, the supreme path of all victors throughout the three times, which was practiced by the mahāsiddhas of bygone times and is the life-essence of vīras and dākinīs, is mahāmudrā, mind itself.

Furthermore, the Tantra of the Vajra Cage says: "Through meditating on the mind as supreme buddha one awakens as a buddha in this life. For there is no buddha or sentient being apart from this precious mind." This has been taught by Vajradhara.

The *Guhyasamāja*, the king of tantras, says: "It is free of all phenomena. It has abandoned the aggregates, elements, sense sources, apprehended objects, and the apprehending subject. With the selflessness of phenomena in utter equanimity, your own primordially birthless mind is the nature of emptiness." These words were spoken by the Bhagavān. The Protector of the World, Tiliipa, taught: "I, Tili, have taught that the suchness of your own mind is the result." By reciting these profound words, you will meditate on mahāmudrā, your own mind. Generally, mental activity or its absence and the existence or nonexistence of arising are mere conceptualities.

Any type of meditative concentration accomplished by focusing or relaxing, are deviations leading to higher god realms. So, just as water is poured into water or butter mixed with butter, directly actualize your own primordial wisdom for yourself in a single instant! The profound primordial wisdom which you realize transcends the realm of speech, thought, consciousness, and expression. It is realized by those with fortunate karmic propensities, it relies on the path of blessings and is completely beyond conceptual mind. It is not in the domain of logicians.

So, I request you O sublime one to endeavor in habituating your mind!

Since these profound words of advice of the precious guru, the lord of Dharma, should not be put down in writing as I have done here, owing to your encouragement, O sublime one, whatever contradictions or confusions there may be, I humbly request the sublime patience of the assemblies of gurus and *dākinīs*.

This concludes the letter sent to Gompa Drakpa Dorje. By the beggar Ratnaśri, a Śākya bhikṣu.