

MOONBEAMS OF MAHĀMUDRĀ SURVEY

A SURVEY OF

DAGPO TASHI NAMGYAL'S MOONBEAMS OF MAHĀMUDRĀ

BY LAMA TILMANN BORGHARDT

BASED ON THE TRANSLATION BY ELISABETH M. CALLAHAN (SNOW LION, 2019)

[ci-dessous en français, traduit par deepl.com]

Video One: Introduction

- Why study this book “Moonbeams of Mahāmudrā” by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal?
 - complete explanation of Kagyu Mahāmudrā
 - background of all meditation instructions like for the “Ocean of true Meaning” etc.
 - background of L. Tilmann’s lineage (Gendün Rinpoche, Gampopa, Karmapas)
 - careful English translation by Elisabeth M. Callahan
 - easier, incomplete English version by Traleg Rinpoche
 - French translation by Christian Charrier
 - German translation in preparation by Judith Debbeler and a translation team in Rangjung Yeshe Institute
 - overview of the teaching material existing so far in the various languages (audios and transcripts see Ekayana Media Library)
- Why these videos? Who is the intended audience?
 - to present an overview on Mahāmudrā practice in form of a study manual
 - See: *Translator’s introduction on Kagyu Mahāmudrā, pages 29 – 38*
 - to reduce the hesitation to study this book personally, giving guidance
 - to allow interested practitioners to get a quick orientation followed by personal reading of the book and listening to the audios of the detailed explanation
 - to catch up with the ongoing curriculum (sentence by sentence explanation in English, German and French)
 - pointing out the essentials of each chapter to not get lost in less important details
 - explaining the structure or inner logic of the presentation (abhidharma approach)
 - not intended as a manual of meditation instructions
 - not intended to replace the curriculum
- Who is the author? Short biography of Dhagpo Tashi Namgyal
 - See: *Translator’s introduction, pages 38 – 41, and abbreviated biography pages 65 – 78*
 - lived in 1513–1587, 400 years after Gampopa
 - supposed to be Gampopa’s first official reincarnation
 - 14th throne holder at Gampopa’s monastery

- trained by (the 13th abbot), his uncle Gampo Chöje Sönam Lhundrup
- Context of this book in its time, the author's intent
 - further defining the Kagyu Mahāmudrā approach
 - explaining the approach to outsiders of the Kagyu tradition
 - giving the oral transmission a common, easily understandable reference text
 - clarifying issues of debate with other traditions (Sakya, Gelug)

Video Two: Outline of the Book

- *Moonbeams, Outline of text, pages 9 – 21; Translator's introduction, pages 42 – 57*

I. Introduction: **Why** we meditate on the nature of mind

- A. All phenomena are experienced in mind
- B. Problems of not meditating on the nature of mind
- C. Virtues of meditating on the nature of mind

II. Main Part: **How** we meditate on the nature of mind

A. **Common** Meditation Approach (Part One)

- 1. Śamatha and Vipāśyanā explained together
- 2. Śamatha
- 3. Vipāśyanā
- 4. How to meditate on the view (Removing doubts)

B. **Particular** Mahāmudrā Approach (Part Two)

- 5. Generating confidence
- 6. Preliminaries
- 7. Various Mahāmudrā approaches
- Gradual instructions
 - 8. Śamatha
 - 9. Vipāśyanā
- 10. Pointing out instructions
- 11. Sustaining Mahāmudrā meditation
 - The necessity to sustain
 - The methods to sustain
- 12. Eliminating deviations and strayings in meditation
- 13. Enhancing the realization
- 14. How realization develops
 - Differentiating four yogas (levels of practice)
 - How the realizations of the four yogas develop

15. The four yogas in detail

- One-pointedness
- Simplicity (freedom from elaborations)
- One Taste
- Nonmeditation
- How the bhūmis and paths are traversed through the four yogas

III. Colophon

Video Three: Common Exposition of Śamatha and Vipāśyanā

➤ *Moonbeams, pages 15 – 45 (chapter 1)*

1. Summary

- Tashi Namgyal will follow here the well-known presentation of the sūtra oriented treatises.
- In the same way as every part of a tree is connected to the trunk, every samādhi (meditative absorption) is connected to mental calm and intuitive insight.
- To be engaged one-pointedly (without distraction) with a wholesome focus or content of meditation corresponds to mental calm (śamatha).
- To understand the nature of the meditative experience with wholesome differentiating wisdom (prajñā) corresponds to intuitive insight (vipāśyanā).
- The union of these two allows for an awakening understanding of reality to arise.

2. Systematic Presentation

- Causes of calm and insight:* wholesome conduct, pure view, the guru's blessings, dependent origination, gathering the accumulations of positive force and awareness, purifying veils, residing in a conducive place, having few desires, being content, reducing activities, relinquishing attachment and aversion, relying upon awakened beings, listening to them, studying their teaching, and contemplating it deeply.
- Eliminating obscurations (veils)* like dullness and agitation which are the main obstacles, showing as remorse, sluggishness, drowsiness, doubts, pleasure-seeking, malice, distraction of attention, external or internal distraction, distraction related to characteristics or to negative propensities, laziness, forgetfulness, non-exertion, and excessive application. They are eliminated through skilfully directing one's attention, developing trust (faith), motivation, right effort (exertion), suppleness, mindfulness, alertness, applied intention, and the equanimity of remaining in the natural state.
- Knowing (identifying) the essences of calm and insight:* Undistracted (one-pointed) mind resting in mind and deeply understanding (differentiating) phenomena (reality). with the help of nonconceptual and conceptual supports for calm and insight one progresses from approximative calm and insight to true (pure) calm and insight.
- Knowing (presenting) the sub-categories of calm and insight:* the nine stages of mental calm and the three or four types of insight plus the six modes of inquiry.

- v. *Explaining the order of practice:* mental calm supports insight; insight enhances calm; we need to cultivate insight right from the beginning without pursuing calm separately
- vi. *Cultivating the unity of calm and insight:* Since insight is unstable without calm, and since calm without insight does eliminate the obscurations, we need to practice both: in a clear, relaxed mind insight into suchness (nature of mind) appears effortlessly.
- vii. *Explaining the results:* Calm leads to mental stability free from afflictions and insight leads to wisdom that purifies the tendencies of lacking awareness. Furthermore, śamatha reverses attachment to sense pleasures and characteristics, gives heightened perceptions and samādhis, and ensures good rebirth, while vipaśyanā brings happiness to all beings, recognizes the nature of all phenomena, and liberates from involuntary rebirth. Together they lead into complete awakening.

Video Four: Śamatha Preparation and General Exposition of Meditation Objects

➤ *Moonbeams, pages 47 – 51 (chapter 2, first part)*

A. Preparations

- Restraining sense faculties, being attentive
- taking care of proper amounts and quality of food
- on a comfortable seat, in a posture enhancing clarity
- breathing slowly without effort, willing to tolerate difficulties
- disregarding desire for possessions and worldly endeavours
- maintaining wholesome conduct
- applying oneself with joyful perseverance

B. Objects (focus) of meditation

1. General exposition of meditation objects

- *Universal objects*
 - (1) Focussing on conceptual representations with initial analysis
 - (2) resting on nonconceptual representations without analysis
 - (3) directing one's attention on *what* arises (quantitative)
or on *how* it arises (qualitative)
 - (4) repeatedly refreshing the intention to accomplish one's purpose.
- *Objects which change our attitude and behaviour*
Meditating for example on ugliness, kindness, dependent origination, the way sense perceptions arise with their elemental qualities (dhātus), and breathing.
- *Objects which give expertise in knowing non-self*
Meditating on the aggregates (skandhas)
sense fields (dhātus), sensory processes (āyatanas)
12 links of dependent origination

and the effects of actions.

– *Objects which purify mental afflictions*

(1) Focussing on the experience that neither coarse nor subtle (calm) saṃsāric states give lasting happiness.

(2) Meditating all aspects of the four truths (suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path of liberation).

Video Five: Śamatha Practice

➤ *Moonbeams, pages 51 – 62 (chapter 2, second part)*

2. When to practice what?

For all afflictions exist corresponding focusses of meditation which help to purify them:

- attachment
- aggression
- bewilderment
- pride
- excessive thinking
- various types of confusion about:
 - formative forces
 - self or non-self
 - interdependence due to causes and conditions
 - impermanence
 - suffering
 - enchantment with sense pleasures etc.

3. Advice on initial objects of meditation

Start with *one* object, for example the breath.

Focus *inward* on the body as it is, as a deity, symbols, light rays, experience of joy etc.

Focus *outward* on ordinary (worldly) or special (spiritual) sensory experiences

4. How mindfulness and alertness sustain meditation

Mindfulness maintains the stream of awareness and prevents the mind from straying.

Alertness recognizes when it has strayed and brings it back.

Balance tightness and looseness, effort and relaxation, to stay in flawless absorption.

C. The way to practice śamatha

Eliminate the five faults through *eight applications* (see p. 24).

Practice the *nine stages*: settling, continuous settling, renewed settling, increased settling, taming, pacification, full pacification, one-pointedness, and equipoise. (p. 57f.)

Apply the *six strengths* – hearing, reflecting, mindfulness, alertness, joyful perseverance, and familiarization – to progress through the nine stages. (p. 59f.)

Thus, progress through the *four types of attention*: tightly focussed, intermittently engaged, uninterruptedly engaged, and spontaneous. (p.60f.)

[Supplement from the oral instructions: The supreme focus of calm abiding is bodhicitta – to rest in the heart of awakening, meditating in the bodhicitta motivation and view...]

Video Six: Different Aspects of Insight Practice

➤ *Moonbeams, pages 63 – 65 (chapter 3, first part)*

A) General explanation: Different types of insight meditation

1. mundane vipaśyanā (insight) develops a general understanding of the mind
2. lesser (basic) supramundane vipaśyanā develops an understanding of the four truths and of the absence of an individual self
3. higher supramundane vipaśyanā develops an understanding of the nature of mind and all phenomena, which includes:
 - understanding meaning
 - understanding entities
 - understanding characteristics
 - understanding qualities
 - understanding time
 - understanding reasonings
 - through differentiating phenomena (quantitative aspect)
 - thoroughly differentiating phenomena (qualitative aspect)
 - differentiating phenomena as to their coarse and subtle aspects
 - discerning, analysing, and understanding the view
 - abiding, meditating in the view without discernment or analysis
 - understanding the abiding state (nature of mind)
 - realizing the view of definite meaning in relation to mind and phenomena
 - finely discerning all further aspects of dharma

Video Seven: How to Give Rise to Insight

➤ *Moonbeams, pages 66 – 85 (chapter 3, second part)*

B) The way to generate the view for vipaśyanā to arise

Developing the view of absence of self with the help of reasoning, logic, and deep observation, thus undermining the belief in the existence of a self in the individual (perceiving subject, mind, soul) and of a self in phenomena (perceived objects, experiences).

- refuting a self-entity of persons
- refuting a self-entity of phenomena
- exploring beliefs in existence, non-existence, both, neither
- exploring appearances, mind, empty nature, spontaneous presence, self-liberation
- contemplating pointing-out instructions on mind and reality
- remembering the view
- meditating, resting in the view
- engaging in post-absorption activity while staying in the view

Video Eight: Introduction to Analytical and Resting Meditation

➤ *Moonbeams, pages 87 – 89 (chapter 4, first part)*

Using analysis and resting we will find it easy to discover the true point of meditation. Not using both, analysis remains intellectual, and resting remains dualistic. Analytical meditation uses inferential cognition based on critical investigation using scriptures and reasonings. Finally, analysis has to lead beyond terms and referents into direct cognition. Resting meditation uses direct cognition while remaining in equipoise with suchness in the natural abiding state.

Resting in mental calm (śamatha) allows for wisdom to clearly analyse the actual experience.

- (1) First, insight meditation (vipaśyanā) uses conceptual thinking and nonconceptual analysis.
- (2) Then, vipaśyanā does not rely further on conceptual thinking, but mostly uses nonconceptual analysis (examination) of the present experience, for example to notice deviations from the resting state (dullness, agitation...) and arouse alertness to correct this.
- (3) Finally, there is the vipaśyanā free of conceptuality and analysis.

Video Nine: Using Analysis and Resting to Enter the View

➤ *Moonbeams, pages 89 – 95 (chapter 4, second part)*

During śamatha we need analysis (discerning wisdom) to know the presence, cause, interaction, and nature of the afflictions, and to modify our way to meditate in accordance with the actual experience. But when the aim of naturally supple resting in clear awareness is achieved, all further analytical processes need to be abandoned. This is the “pacification of discernments at the end of analysis” leading into nonconceptual, unmoving vipaśyanā.

When conceptual thinking and analysis stop after full discernment, true vipaśyanā arises, and we simply “rest in the view”. The unification of calm and insight is achieved, and we only occasionally use analysis to verify just how it goes.

Beginners who experience agitation due to an excess of analytical meditation should cultivate more śamatha, but when they experience sluggishness from too much resting meditation, they should cultivate vipaśyanā. When both are balanced, we cultivate equanimity in suchness without active application. Mind rests in mind.

Resting in the view is knowing the empty nature and sustaining the freedom from elaborations (simplicity) resulting from that understanding (seeing).

Discerning wisdom (prajñā) arising from study and contemplation cuts through misinterpretations concerning reality (wrong views); like showing a horse the racetrack.

Discerning wisdom arising from meditation leads to the direct understanding that all phenomena are ungraspable (empty), without a stable core or self-entity. Discerning wisdom in a calm mind allows for clear insight to arise, just like light coming into fine eyes allows for clear seeing.

When clinging to characteristics blocks our mind, whatever realisation we might already have had, we again need analytical meditation to see through the illusion and blockage.

Video Ten: Clarifying the Actual View

➤ *Moonbeams, pages 95 – 107 (chapter 4, third part)*

The point of the whole path is to develop an unshakeable, non-fabricated certainty concerning the nature of mind and reality, knowing “suchness”, the way it is. Simply resting suspended in ordinary “stagnant” nonconceptuality does not produce that certainty.

We need to be mindful, alert and fully aware (interested), which gives rise to seeing and the resulting certainty. To enable this, we abandon even the slightest fixation on the experience of the fundamental view (true seeing) and on the absence of self-entity or lack of reality – and rest completely open without any thought like “that is it” or “this is empty”.

In the seeing that truly liberates (“right view”) śamatha and vipaśyanā are both present free from all grasping and all blockages – if not, it is not the true seeing. The result of analysis is to see and understand beyond concepts.

Initially, to investigate the view, it is impossible not to employ discerning wisdom (prajñā). But later, we learn to let the mind rest in itself, in suchness, in the empty nature of all appearances.

When seeing how it is, there is no seeing of anything, of any phenomenon. Mind, free from dullness and agitation, does not conceive of anything and does not grasp at anything. Free from mindfulness and attention involving subject and object, mind rests free from elaborations. In the nature of phenomena (dharmatā), just as it is, mind rests just as it is.

In the sphere of all phenomena (dharmadhātu), complete simplicity free from elaborations, mind rests free from elaborations. During that time, discerning wisdom (prajñā) ceases to function as a mental activity distinguishing various aspects of experience and shows as basic, empty luminosity, which clears away everything that could be a flaw.

Video Eleven: Summary of Insight Meditation

➤ *Moonbeams, pages 107 – 109 (chapter 4, fourth part)*

Tashi Namgyal summarizes insight meditation in a paragraph that merits closer attention:

1. First understand all phenomena (subject and object) to be mind.
2. Then examine whether a mind exists in past, present, and future.
3. Look whether it is one mind or several minds.
4. Find out whether mind arises, stays somewhere, and ceases at times.
5. Discover mind’s all-pervading natural “luminosity” (awareness).
6. Thus, understand that mind does not exist as something.
7. See that subject and object never existed.
8. Also realize that the discerning wisdom has no existence as something like the fire produced from rubbing wood, consumes the wood, and then goes out.
9. Discover how that type of view dispels all dullness and agitation.
10. The schism between perceiver and perceived is gone together with the faults of apprehending characteristics and conceptualizing
11. Mind rests in the nonconceptual samādhi of the “absence of characteristics” without any need to create a forceful certainty.

This finishes the general outline of what we need to know in order to practice deep meditation in accordance with the buddhist sūtras, tantras, and oral instructions of the great masters.

LES RAYONS DE LUNE DE L'ENQUÊTE MAHĀMUDRĀ

UNE ENQUÊTE DE

LES RAYONS DE LUNE DE DAGPO TASHI NAMGYAL DE MAHĀMUDRĀ

PAR LAMA TILMANN BORGHARDT

BASÉ SUR LA TRADUCTION D'ELISABETH M. CALLAHAN (LION DES NEIGES, 2019)

Première vidéo : Introduction

Pourquoi étudier ce livre "Moonbeams of Mahāmudrā" de Dakpo Tashi Namgyal ?

explication complète de Kagyu Mahāmudrā

l'historique de toutes les instructions de méditation comme pour "l'Océan du vrai sens", etc.

historique de la lignée de L. Tilmann (Gendün Rinpoché, Gampopa, Karmapas)

traduction anglaise soignée par Elisabeth M. Callahan

version anglaise plus facile et incomplète par Traleg Rinpoché

Traduction française par Christian Charrier

Traduction allemande en préparation par Judith Debbeler et une équipe de traduction de l'Institut Rangjung Yeshe

aperçu du matériel pédagogique existant à ce jour dans les différentes langues (audios et transcriptions voir Médiathèque Ekayana)

Pourquoi ces vidéos ? Quel est le public visé ?

pour présenter un aperçu de la pratique de Mahāmudrā sous la forme d'un manuel d'étude

Voir : Introduction du traducteur sur Kagyu Mahāmudrā, pages 29 - 38

réduire les hésitations à étudier personnellement ce livre, en donnant des conseils

permettre aux praticiens intéressés d'obtenir une orientation rapide suivie d'une lecture personnelle du livre et de l'écoute des audios de l'explication détaillée

pour rattraper le retard pris dans le programme d'études en cours (explication phrase par phrase en anglais, allemand et français

en soulignant les éléments essentiels de chaque chapitre pour ne pas se perdre dans des détails moins importants

expliquer la structure ou la logique interne de la présentation (approche abhidharma)

n'est pas conçu comme un manuel d'instructions de méditation

n'est pas destiné à remplacer le programme d'études

Qui est l'auteur ? Courte biographie de Dhagpo Tashi Namgyal

Voir : Introduction du traducteur, pages 38 - 41, et biographie abrégée pages 65 - 78

a vécu en 1513-1587, 400 ans après Gampopa

censée être la première réincarnation officielle de Gampopa

14e titulaire du trône au monastère de Gampopa

formé par (le 13e abbé), son oncle Gampo Chöje Sönam Lhundrup

Contexte de ce livre en son temps, intention de l'auteur

définir plus précisément l'approche Kagyu Mahāmudrā

expliquer l'approche aux étrangers de la tradition Kagyu

donner à la transmission orale un texte de référence commun et facilement compréhensible

clarifier les questions de débat avec d'autres traditions (Sakya, Gelug)

Deuxième vidéo : Présentation du livre

Moonbeams, Plan du texte, pages 9 - 21 ; Introduction du traducteur, pages 42 - 57

I. Introduction : Pourquoi nous méditons sur la nature de l'esprit

A. Tous les phénomènes sont vécus dans l'esprit

B. Problèmes liés à la non méditation sur la nature de l'esprit

C. Les vertus de la méditation sur la nature de l'esprit

II. Partie principale : Comment méditer sur la nature de l'esprit

A. Approche commune de la méditation (première partie)

1. Śamatha et Vipāśyanā expliqués ensemble

2. Śamatha

3. Vipāśyanā

4. Comment méditer sur la vue (Éliminer les doutes)

B. Approche particulière Mahāmudrā (deuxième partie)

5. Générer la confiance

6. Préliminaires

7. Diverses approches Mahāmudrā

Des instructions progressives

8. Śamatha

9. Vipāśyanā

10. Signaler des instructions

11. Soutenir la méditation Mahāmudrā

La nécessité de soutenir

Les méthodes pour soutenir

12. Élimination des déviations et des égarés dans la méditation

13. Renforcer la réalisation

14. Comment se développe la réalisation

Différencier quatre yogas (niveaux de pratique)

Comment se développent les réalisations des quatre yogas

15. Les quatre yogas en détail

One-pointedness

Simplicité (absence d'élaborations)

Un seul goût

Non-méditation

Comment le bhūmis et les chemins sont parcourus à travers les quatre yogas

III. Colophon

Vidéo 3 : Exposition commune de Śamatha et Vipāśyanā

Rayons de lune, pages 15 - 45 (chapitre 1)

1. Résumé

Tashi Namgyal suivra ici la présentation bien connue des traités orientés sūtra.

De la même manière que chaque partie d'un arbre est reliée au tronc, chaque samādhi (absorption méditative) est reliée au calme mental et à la perspicacité intuitive.

Le fait d'être engagé à un seul point (sans distraction) avec une concentration ou un contenu de méditation sain correspond au calme mental (śamatha).

Comprendre la nature de l'expérience méditative avec une sagesse saine et différenciée (prajñā) correspond à la perspicacité intuitive (vipāśyanā).

L'union de ces deux éléments permet d'éveiller la compréhension de la réalité.

2. Présentation systématique

i. Causes de calme et de perspicacité : conduite saine, vue pure, bénédiction du gourou, origine dépendant de l'individu, rassembler les accumulations de force positive et de conscience, purifier les voiles, résider dans un endroit propice, avoir peu de désirs, être satisfait, réduire les activités, renoncer à l'attachement et à l'aversion, s'appuyer sur les êtres éveillés, les écouter, étudier leur enseignement et le contempler profondément.

ii. Éliminer les obscurcissements (voiles) comme l'ennui et l'agitation qui sont les principaux obstacles, en montrant comme remords, léthargie, somnolence, doutes, recherche de plaisir, malveillance, distraction de l'attention, distraction externe ou interne, distraction liée

Traduit avec www.DeepL.com/Translator (version gratuite)