

# The Path of Aspiration for the Mahamudra of Definite Meaning *by Lord Rangjung Dorje*

*Short title: “Mahamudra Prayer of the Third Karmapa”*

About the author: The Third Gyalwa Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (Tibet, 1284-1339) was the head of the Karma Kagyu school and one of the great Mahamudra masters of his time and a central holder of the Dzogchen transmission of the Nyingma school as well. He wrote important treatises to clarify the philosophical position of the Kagyu School.

*Full Tibetan title:*

*rje rang byung zhabs kyis mdzad pa'i nges don phyag rgya chen po'i smon lam*

*Short Tibetan title: phyag chen smon lam*

About the text: This prayer and meditation text leads through the successive stages of preparation, calm abiding and deep insight into the practice of Mahamudra. It was written by the Third Karmapa, a great Tibetan master, from the point of view of the union of Mahamudra, Dzogchen and Madhyamaka.

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*Dhagpo Kündröl Ling, September 2009*

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*by Lord Rangjung Dorje*

NAMO GURU. (HOMAGE TO THE TEACHERS.)

Lamas and yidam deities of the mandalas,  
Victorious Ones and your offspring throughout the three times and ten directions,  
Please lovingly consider me and grant your blessings  
That my aspiration prayers may be realised exactly as intended.

Springing forth from the snow mountain of the pure intentions  
Of myself and all the countless sentient beings,  
May streams of wholesome activity, undefiled by the threefold sphere,  
Flow into the ocean of the four kayas of the Victorious Ones.

For as long as this is not accomplished, however long that may be,  
May we, throughout our succession of lives and rebirths,  
Not even know the words “harmful deed” or “suffering”,  
But enjoy the splendour of an ocean of beneficial deeds and happiness.

May we obtain the supreme freedoms and endowments, and with trust, energy and wisdom  
Follow excellent spiritual guides, receive the nectar of their instructions,  
Accomplish them correctly, and without any obstacles  
Practice the noble dharma in all our lives.

Hearing the scriptures and applying reason free us from the veil of not knowing,  
Contemplating the oral key instructions overcomes the darkness of doubt,  
The luminosity arising from meditation clarifies reality as it is –  
May the radiance of this threefold wisdom increase.

Through the nature of the ground, the two truths free from the extremes of eternalism and nihilism,  
And the supreme path, the two accumulations free from the extremes of assertion and denial,  
We attain the fruit, the two benefits free from the extremes of existence and peace.  
May we meet with this dharma free from deviation and error.

The ground of purification is mind itself, the unity of clarity and emptiness,  
That which purifies is the great vajra yoga of mahamudra,  
What is to be purified are the adventitious stains of confusion.  
May the fruit of purification, the stainless dharmakaya, be actualised.

To have cut assertions concerning the ground is certainty of the view,  
Sustaining that undistractedly is the key point of meditation,  
To exercise proficiency in all aspects of meditation is supreme action.  
May we have certainty in view, meditation and action.

All phenomena are manifestations of mind,  
And concerning mind, there is no mind – mind is empty of self nature.  
Empty, it appears without obstruction in every possible form.  
Examining this thoroughly, may we sever the underlying root.

Self-arising appearances without any existence are mistaken to be objects,  
And by the power of ignorance, self-arising awareness is mistaken to be a self.  
This dualistic fixation has made us wander in the sphere of samsaric existence.  
May we cut the illusory productions of ignorance directly at the very root.

Mind is not existent, since even the Victorious Ones do not see it.  
It is not non-existent, since it is the basis of samsara and nirvana.  
It is neither both at once, nor none of them, but the Middle Way of unity.  
May we realise the true nature of mind, free from extremes.

There is no way to indicate it and say: "This is it."  
There is no way to refute it and say: "This is not it."  
The nature of phenomena transcends the intellect and is not conditioned.  
May we gain certainty in this authentic, ultimate end.

Not realising this, we circle in the ocean of samsara.  
Realising it, Buddha is not somewhere else.  
Everything is this; nothing is not this.  
May we see the true nature, the hidden dimension of the all-ground.

Appearance is mind and emptiness is also mind.  
Realisation is mind, but confusion is also our mind.  
Arising is mind and cessation is mind.  
May all false assertions be severed in mind.

Unspoiled by the efforts of intentional meditation,  
And unmoved by the winds of ordinary preoccupations,  
May we know how to rest in unfabricated naturalness, just as it occurs,  
And expertly sustain the practice of mind as it truly is.

The waves of coarse and subtle thoughts calm down by themselves  
And the river of undisturbed mind comes to abide naturally.  
Free from the silt and mire of torpor and dullness,  
May the ocean of mental calm remain steady and unperturbed.

Looking again and again into the mind that cannot be seen,  
Clear insight arises that, as it is, nothing is to be seen,  
And severs all doubts about what is or is not.  
Free from confusion, may it naturally recognise its own nature.

Looking into the objects, there are no objects – they are seen to be mind.  
Looking into the mind, there is no mind – it is empty by nature.  
Looking into both, dualistic grasping is freed in itself.  
May we realise luminous clarity – mind as it really is.

Free from mental fabrication, it is the Great Seal (Mahamudra).  
Devoid of extremes, it is the Great Middle Way (Maha-Madhyamaka).  
Encompassing all these, it is also called Great Completion (Maha-Ati).  
Knowing one, the meaning of all is realized – may we attain that confidence.

Free from attachment, great bliss is uninterrupted.  
Free from clinging to characteristics, luminous clarity is unobscured.  
Beyond the intellect, non-conceptuality is spontaneously present.  
Without effort, may our experiences be unceasing.

Clinging to desired 'good' experiences is liberated in itself  
And confusion about 'bad' thoughts is purified in the space of their own nature:  
Ordinary mind is free from abandoning and cultivating, avoiding and obtaining.  
May we realise simplicity, the truth of how phenomena are.

The nature of beings has always been Buddha,  
But not realising this, they wander endlessly in samsara.  
For sentient beings, whose suffering knows no bounds,  
May overwhelming compassion arise in me!

Overwhelming compassion being strong and unobstructed,  
In the moments of such love the meaning of the 'empty nature' nakedly dawns.  
May we practise this unerring, supreme path of unity  
Day and night, without ever leaving it.

Through the power of meditation may the eyes and higher perceptions appear,  
And may we ripen sentient beings, cultivate buddha realms,  
And perfect the paths of aspiration for the accomplishment of all buddha dharmas.  
By bringing to completion the ripening, cultivation, and perfection may all fully awaken.

By the compassion of the buddhas and their offspring in the ten directions  
And by the power of all the truly beneficial acts that exist,  
May the pure paths of aspiration of myself and all beings  
be realised just as they are intended.

*This "Path of Aspiration for the Mahamudra of Definite Meaning"  
was composed by [the Third Karmapa] Lord Rangjung Dorje [1284-1339].*

*Translated by Sönam Lhündrup*