



This transcript is humbly dedicated to the long life of  
His Holiness the XVIIth Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje,  
to the long life of everyone &  
to the preservation & propagation of the Buddhadharma,  
especially of the Karma Kagyü Lineage.



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**Mahamudra Meditation**

Presented in English at Karma Chang Chub Choephel Ling in Heidelberg, 2009.

## Introduction

Having recited *The Dorje Chang Lineage Prayer*, let me ask if you were able to relax or if you felt stressed during the short Mahamudra meditation that we did together?

The purpose of engaging in Mahamudra meditation is to recognize one's own nature and to be in the simple, organic way. If one plans to grow a vegetable garden, for example, it's natural that one would have to know how and would need to have insight so that it grows well. Using chemicals to have organic crops that are free of insects is lacking insight. Mahamudra meditation means keeping one's mind in an organic way. Nowadays one buys meat and vegetables in a *Bio-Laden* ('a health-food shop'), but meditation cannot be bought. Meditation is like a *Bio-Laden*. It's possible that one goes to the wrong *Bio-Laden*, too, and that's a problem. So one has to know how to keep one's mind *bio*, i.e., more natural, more authentic. Mahamudra meditation is like that. It isn't something special that one creates with one's imagination but means doing nothing. Mahamudra becomes unnatural if one manipulates one's mind.

One lets one's mind rest in an organic way when one meditates Mahamudra and doesn't do anything. When one thinks that one is meditating Mahamudra, one isn't. One usually thinks that meditation means doing something, but Mahamudra means not doing anything. This can sound a little bit strange. One has the habit of doing something all the time and therefore it isn't that easy to meditate Mahamudra. When one thinks one has to do something to meditate, then one has a concept and, because of making oneself busy, one can't relax.

In Mahamudra meditation, one leaves one's mind as it is, no matter what comes. It doesn't matter whether one is focusing on something or not, whether one is thinking or not, one rests in the natural basis of one's mind. One doesn't have thoughts about anything but leaves one's mind as it is. For example, one leaves one's mind like hay one cut, bundled into a hay stack, and that lies on the ground naturally. One is restless and it becomes too much if one tries to manipulate the hay stack in a specific way. In Mahamudra meditation, one should rest like that. Is that okay or do you want to do it differently? Mahamudra is about resting one's mind in meditation. It's not necessary to meditate for a long time. One meditates for a short while and more often and rests in the nature of one's mind whenever one wants to. We will go through the practice step-by-step. There are many ways to meditate Mahamudra. I will speak about a few different ways so that it's easier for you to understand.

The purpose of meditating Mahamudra is to win a deeper understanding or one can say to recognize one's organic mind. How can one rest in one's organic, authentic mind if one doesn't recognize it? There are no labels one can go by, like the labels at the grocery store that help one find the organic food that one is looking for. One doesn't have to search the labels when one goes to a bio-shop, but the bio-shop in meditation is a bit advanced. When one begins to meditate, one has to find and recognize what bio is. Otherwise one has a problem. Talking about bio in this context is talking about one's biological, organic, authentic mind. One has to recognize it, otherwise one is an easy prey for chemical products. There is bio in every moment of one's mind, whether one is fearful, angry, happy, or sad. One has to recognize the bio-nature of one's mind,

no matter what arises. One wants to find it - it is there, but one has to know the technique of finding it oneself.

Any first moment of consciousness is one's genuine bio-mind, which one needs to recognize. For example, the first moment one recognizes that one has fear is bio, but because of one's fear of fear in the second moment one makes one's mind restless and thus feels tense. As a result, one's mind becomes un-bio. If one recognizes one's mind in the first moment, it can remain bio. It might be a problem – it might not be a problem. This depends upon recognizing the first moment of one's mind by resting in it. How does one do this? One doesn't become involved with thoughts while meditating. If one thinks of the past, then one can't recognize and rest in one's mind. If one thinks of the future, one isn't in the present. If one thinks that one is in the present, one isn't because it has passed. One isn't present in the here and now when one thinks of the past, present, or future.

Let's take fear as an example. If one is fearful, one doesn't become involved with the thought and doesn't think of the fear one felt in the past or will experience in the future. Instead, one is present. Then the fear that one has isn't fear, and it becomes interesting. For example, the first moment of fear is like a clear sky in spring. Any thought one has about one's fear belongs to the past. If one continues thinking about it, then it's like a cloud that covers the spring sky. When one becomes more and more involved with one's thoughts, then the sky becomes more and more cloudy. There are no new clouds if one doesn't follow after one's thoughts. We have enough clouds as it is, so we don't need more. Let me give another example.

When one goes into a store to buy glasses, one's first thought to buy them is fearful. The first moment of fear arises when one thinks that one doesn't want to buy dirty glasses. If the glasses aren't clean, one won't buy them. There are three kinds of fear of fear: fear of the past, fear of the present, and fear of the future. Worrying that the glasses one wants to buy have to be clean, seeing that they aren't after one bought and used them, and thinking they will become dirty in the future encompass the three times. The nature of anything one is fearful for is like the glasses, and fear evolves into more fear the more one thinks about it. This is like smudges on the glasses. It's just an example for the nature of one's mind, which is like clean glasses. If they get dirty, i.e., stained with fear, then they become covered with too much dirt. But the glasses one bought weren't dirty, so one can't say that the nature of the glasses is dirty. The nature is clean. This is true for every first moment of one's mind, before one gave in to a second thought. So, fear that one generates out of fear is like dirt on glasses that were initially clean. Linking one's conceptual thinking with one's fear is like dirt on the glasses and the amount depends upon how strongly one remains involved with one's fear. Every moment is like that. In Mahamudra meditation, in the first moment a practitioner recognizes the clean glasses and rests in that recognition, not making them dirty by giving in to second thoughts. The dirt is not the nature of the glasses one bought and is only temporary. Resting in Mahamudra means resting one's mind in the way of the clean glasses. Recognition means recognizing the clean glasses, i.e., one's pure mind, that wasn't dirty when one bought it.

I will speak about the meditation practices slowly. This is just a general idea. If I talk too much, you might miss the idea and not get the hints. For example, one can think without thinking, have fear without being afraid, be angry without being angry, or be upset without being upset, but one

needs to practice resting in that. Resting in the first moment, free of the three times, is the method of Mahamudra meditation. It's possible to understand what it means to think without thinking, and it's interesting. Is that okay? Or are you confused? Or is it so easy that you don't believe it? You see, Mahamudra meditation is meditation without meditating. It's a really powerful meditation - if you can do it. Is it too hard or too simple?

**Question:** "I have a question about calm abiding and special insight meditation. Are they included in Mahamudra meditation? Don't we start with calm abiding meditation, then go on with special insight, and then do what you spoke about?" **Lama Kelzang:** Yes, that's the method I will speak about. The text I am referring to during this seminar deals with special insight. I'm giving an idea now about how Mahamudra should be meditated. One can get lost in methods if one learns too many. The mind is very tricky. One holds on to methods one hears about and then focuses one's attention on the wrong thing. For example, one might see a better and cheaper watch at the store after one bought a watch similar to the one that one wanted for many years and was too lazy to look for. This is the same as having too many methods. One grasps at a method and doesn't get the real thing.

As said, Mahamudra meditation is practiced to recognize one's mind. One's mind starts with the bio-mind, but due to habits ends up un-bio. Every mind starts with the bio-mind. But one fails to remain in bio and is un-bio all the time. How? When one's unnatural mind comes up, one can't relax and can't be natural. When one is unnatural, one is uncomfortable, which shows that one is un-bio. One is comfortable when one is in the bio-state. Do you understand? If not, I can explain it a little more complicating. Then it might be easier for some of you.

The practical level is like this: If one wants to recognize the nature of one's mind, one just has to rest in what I am calling "the bio-state of the mind." One isn't involved too much with concepts of the past, present, and future but rests in the natural state of one's mind. One wants to rest in the here and now, but one isn't in the here when thinking about the past. If one thinks of the future, one isn't there either. If one thinks one is here in the now, one isn't, because one is just thinking. Mind is the same in every moment. One has to try one's best whenever one meditates. It doesn't matter if one meditates for a long time or for a short time, for one second or for two minutes. Resting and recognizing are important. If one practices, one can rest like that when one dies and doesn't need too much stuff. So, resting like that is helpful in two ways, during one's usual meditation and when one dies. We don't need much.

This was a short discussion of the essential approach of Mahamudra meditation so that you don't misinterpret the method. One should not misunderstand the method. It might become problematic when one wants to meditate, because one might become very busy by thinking too much, e.g., "Oh, I should be meditating. Should I focus here, or here, or here?" Or, "I wanted to meditate on my thoughts, but there are no thoughts, so how should I meditate?" It's no problem. Or, "Now I'm meditating and have lots of fear. How do I meditate that?" It's no problem.

At the end, one rests and dedicates, which is ultimate dedication. Relative dedication is thinking one is doing something good through calm abiding practice and dedicating that. There are many ways to dedicate. Mahamudra dedication means doing one thing that encompasses everything. Yes, one can rest in Mahamudra and dedicate. If one wants to develop the motivation of

Bodhicitta, one rests like that and develops Bodhicitta. Then pure Bodhicitta is developed and everything is accomplished through that. -- If you have any questions, please ask.

**Question:** “When I sit down to meditate, I rest and watch what happens. No thoughts and emotions arise, but I have physical sensations. I leave them alone but feel uncomfortable in my mind. Where is the moment of clarity while experiencing physical sensations that I don’t identify with? I just perceive them.” **Lama Kelzang:** A good question, but I don’t have an answer – just kidding. That’s the point. Thoughts settle while one meditates, but one has physical sensations because of having a body. One isn’t too involved with one’s body while meditating. But it’s normal to have physical sensations, otherwise one doesn’t need to have a body. One has gross and subtle levels of consciousness and one has to work with the subtle level by resting as much as possible through meditation practice. Since one isn’t able to relax fully, subtle thoughts are still there when one meditates. So, one has to work on a deeper way of resting and relaxing. Since it’s difficult to recognize subtlest thoughts, it’s sometimes helpful to articulate them in one’s mind, which enables one to recognize them. It’s difficult to describe, so I will give an example. If one has a small irritation that itches, one scratches or rubs it until it becomes bigger. When the irritation spreads to a larger area, it becomes less intense, because it has dispersed and eventually disappears. In meditation, sometimes one thinks one is meditating and thinks one has no consciousness or sensations, but one has misunderstood meditation. In those cases, it’s helpful to prick oneself with a needle so that one is able to recognize a sensation, otherwise one’s mind becomes dull. One sharpens one’s mind that way and practices knowing, because meditation means knowing and being aware. This is still the gross level. If one’s mind isn’t clear, one pricks oneself with a needle so that one’s mind wakes up from being dull. Sometimes one has to do this. Meditation can be misunderstood in many ways. One needs something to figure out so that one’s mind becomes sharp and clear.

Let us do the White Tara Practice together before continuing with the teachings. This year His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa is going through a year of obstacles, so we want to recite the White Tara mantra for the long life of His Holiness as well as for the long life of everyone. One needs to live long. Why? Because there are many things that one has to do. One has to learn to meditate and one has to do many things. One can rest in Mahamudra while meditating White Tara and while reciting her mantra.

### **Approaching Mahamudra**

It would be good to begin one’s practice when approaching Mahamudra by engaging in Guru yoga, which we did by reciting *The Dorje Chang Lineage Prayer*. The purpose of practicing Guru yoga by supplicating the Lineage Lamas is to experience the absolute Lama within oneself. One comes close to the absolute Lama by resting one’s mind in meditation. The practice of Guru yoga is resting in the clear light of one’s own mind. Do you understand? In other words, absolute Guru yoga is resting one’s mind in the nature of one’s mind, which is luminous clarity. One shouldn’t think that luminous clarity is like light, rather the practice is resting one’s mind in the clarity of mind’s pure awareness. I compared pure awareness with clean glasses and a clear spring sky above. The easy way of saying it is being relaxed and not being wrapped up in concepts. So, that’s ultimate Guru yoga. If one wants to really practice Guru yoga, it’s like that.

It's important to receive the blessings, because it's a little bit impossible to approach Mahamudra meditation without the blessings of the Lineage master. One doesn't know how, but it's incredible how Guru yoga works through the blessings. I will speak a little bit about how blessings work, although it's almost impossible to get an idea of what it means by thinking or hearing about it.

Once our Rinpoche, His Eminence Gyaltsab Rinpoche, asked his disciples to come to his monastery in Sikkim during the holidays to receive teachings on the text composed by the Third Jamgon Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje, entitled *The Profound Inner Meaning*. It is an astounding text that elucidates how to meditate the channels, energy-sources, and so forth in ones body. The story I want to tell is about what it means to receive the blessings.

There's a very precious nectar of Guru Padmasambhava that is kept in a vase at Tashiding Monastery, which is near Rinpoche's monastery. Thousands of pilgrims come to Tashiding to receive the blessing on the 10<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the Tibetan year. We wanted to go to the event that we learned in the last minute would take place the next day. I and a few other disciples went to Rinpoche and asked for permission to leave and take part. He was so happy when we asked and told us, "You go today and I will continue teaching the evening of your return." We hadn't made any arrangements and thought we would need to walk the long and steep way. We packed our things and to our surprise there was a taxi at the gate of the monastery. The taxi driver drove us free of charge and agreed to pick us up again to return to Rinpoche the next day. Usually, there are no taxis in that area. We hadn't made any reservations for the night and the site was overcrowded when we arrived, but somebody said we could stay in the room that was reserved for Lamas who weren't able to come. We had nothing to eat, because we hadn't brought anything along. There was much talk that one shouldn't go to restaurants in the area around Tashiding, so we worried where we could eat. We ran into a group of monks from Rumtek Monastery who told us, "Great, we brought enough food along," and they shared what they had with us. There was even food left over after we finished. I realized that all the goodness we experienced was Rinpoche's blessing. We hadn't arranged anything, but everything worked so smoothly – we drove in a nice taxi, found a nice place to sleep, and had good food to eat. It doesn't work like that if one plans. That's one way blessings work. When engaging in Mahamudra meditation, one needs to pray to ones Lama and do Guru yoga. It goes like that and is very easy. The Lineage blessings are very important for Mahamudra meditation, otherwise it's not so easy.

Guru yoga practice plays a very important role when one begins meditating Mahamudra. One does Guru yoga with the Dorje Chang practice. It would be nice to repeat the mantra of His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa, KARMAPA-KHYEN-NO, which everybody knows. It means "Karmapa, think of me." How does one meditate when one recites *The Dorje Chang Lineage Prayer* and repeats His Holiness' mantra? I will give an easy explanation.

If possible, it would be good to imagine oneself in a pure form, in the form of any deity one likes. It's easy to receive the blessings if one thinks of oneself in a pure form. When meditating Mahamudra, one sees oneself as Vajrayogini, has no doubts, and is relaxed actually being that pure form. She represents the wisdom-form of all deities. The Buddha nature encompasses wisdom, so – because one has the Buddha nature - ones nature is the same as that of Vajrayogini.

One doesn't doubt that one is Vajrayogini from that point of view. The quality of Buddha nature is purity, so one is pure from that point of view, too. The qualities of the Buddha nature pertain to qualities and do not refer to an ordinary person. In order to recognize ones Buddha nature, one imagines that one is Vajrayogini and has no doubts.

One thinks a beautiful lotus flower consisting of many petals is above ones head. On top of the lotus is a flat sun disk and on top of that is a flat moon disk. Vajradhara, who is blue in colour, is seated on the sun and moon disk. Vajradhara, the Sanskrit name for *Dorje Chang* in Tibetan, represents our Guru-Lama, who is the Gyalwa Karmapa. This plays a very important role in Mahamudra meditation, because the Karmapa is the essence of the entire Mahamudra Lineage. If one opens ones mind to the Karmapa, one will receive as many of his blessings as one wants. I talked about how the blessing I received worked. One should think and feel like that. If one thinks that the Gyalwa Karmapa is there, one gets his blessings; if one doesn't think that, one doesn't get his blessings. In the future, one can see him if one wants. If one thinks that one has no chance to see him, one needn't worry. The blessings are there if one is open enough. One can say that the Gyalwa Karmapa is like a treasure of Mahamudra meditation.



One visualizes that the First Gyalwa Karmapa is above Dorje Chang in space. Above the Karmapa is the Lineage Master Gampopa; above him is Jetsün Milarepa. Lotsawa Marpa is above Jestün Milarepa, and Shri Naropa is above Lotsawa Marpa; then Shri Tilopa is above Shri Naropa. That is the Mahamudra Lineage that was passed from Dorje Chang, to Tilopa, to Naropa, to Marpa, to Milarepa, to Gampopa, and to the First Gyalwa Karmapa, Düsüm Khyenpa. The Lineage has been passed down in an unbroken continuation until now, to our Root Lama, Dorje Chang who is the Glorious Karmapa. The entire Lineage is above him, so one receives the blessings of the entire Lineage when one visualizes like this. After visualizing in this way while slowly reciting *The Dorje Chang Lineage Prayer*, one rests in meditation and prays, "Karmapa, you are the manifestation of all Buddhas of the Mahamudra Lineage. Please grant us the blessings to meditate Mahamudra," or anything one wishes. Then one repeats his mantra,



After having repeated KARMAPA-KHYEN-NO on one round of ones mala or as often as one can, all masters of the Mahamudra Lineage dissolve into the main Dorje Chang, who is seated in front and only slightly above oneself, making it easier to receive the Lineage blessings.

From the forehead of Dorje Chang, who is the Gyalwa Karmapa, white light streams into ones own forehead. One thinks that all negative karma one has accumulated with ones body has been purified and that one has received the body-blessing of the Mahamudra Lineage and Dorje Chang. One just feels like that. Then one imagines that red light streams from the throat of Dorje Chang and dissolves into ones throat. One thinks that all negative karma one has accumulated with ones speech has been purified and that one has received the speech-blessing of the Mahamudra Lineage from Dorje Chang. Then one imagines that blue light streams from the heart of Dorje Chang and dissolves into ones heart. One thinks that all negative karma one has accumulated with ones mind has been purified and that one has received the mind-blessing, i.e., the qualities of the Mahamudra Lineage from Dorje Chang. Then one imagines that white, red, and blue lights simultaneously stream from the forehead, throat, and heart of Dorje Chang and flow into ones forehead, throat, and heart and that one has thus received the entire Mahamudra blessings. Then Dorje Chang dissolves into light that streams into oneself. Like water poured into water, one becomes inseparable with Dorje Chang, the Gyalwa Karmapa, and relaxes in that experience. One should meditate like that for 3 or 4 minutes when one begins Mahamudra meditation. Then one starts ones Mahamudra meditation. So that is Guru yoga meditation. It's basic and is very important.

I gave an example how the blessings work. Sometimes one forces oneself to meditate and sees that it's not so easy. In that case, something isn't working. So, one needs the Lineage blessings. The blessing master is waiting for one to get it, but ones mind is not open enough. Guru yoga meditation is how to exercise. The Mahamudra master is like the sun. If one comes out from under shade where one is hiding, the sun will make one warm. It's like that, so don't hide in the shade but come out and enjoy the sun. Guru yoga therefore plays a very important role. Having engaged in Guru yoga for a few minutes or as long as one wants, one starts Mahamudra meditation.

### **Mahamudra Meditation**

First one trains in calm abiding meditation for a couple of months or for a year. Doing a little bit is not sufficient. One needs to gain experience. So there's a plan on how to practice calm abiding meditation.

It's important to sit in the correct posture, because it brings one into meditation. The seven aspects of the correct sitting posture mean that ones body is straight, comfortable, and relaxed. One doesn't put much stress on ones body, for example, by thinking, "I'm meditating so much." Then one can't relax. Calm abiding meditation, *shamata* in Sanskrit, consists of meditation with an object and meditation without an object. When one is used to the first, one can do shamata without an object.



When starting to meditate shamata with an object, one can begin by focusing ones mind on an impure object, e.g., a stone, a flower, or a stick. It doesn't matter, but it shouldn't be too big. Its colour shouldn't be bright, otherwise it affects ones eyes and then they start hurting. One places the object of ones choice in front of oneself, not too far and not too near, and rests ones mind on it. This doesn't mean that one holds ones mind tightly on that object, rather one focuses ones attention on it and relaxes. One can't relax if one has concepts. One uses a stone or flower so that one sees whether one is mindful and aware or not. One is mindful if one can rest ones mind on the object of meditation.

One chooses a point on the object, concentrates ones attention on it and relaxes. If the point becomes unclear, there's nothing to worry about. One just rests on the unclarity of what one is trying to focus on. If ones eyes start hurting, one can close them. Sometimes one sees the spot one is focusing on double. It doesn't matter. One can focus on those two spots. In any case, something is happening when one practices in this way. There's no need to think one is doing anything wrong. This happens to me too. It's helpful to change the object of meditation once in a while, otherwise it's boring to always meditate on the same object.

Having meditated regularly on an impure object like a flower or stone for about a month, one chooses a pure object, like a statue, a painting, or a photo of the Buddha or a deity. Meditating a pure form is important in Mahamudra, because one makes a connection. It would be good to have a statue or picture of the Buddha. In the beginning, one again chooses one spot of the image during one session of meditation and focuses ones attention on that spot and not on the entire image. In the next session, one can choose another spot of the image.

Ones mind can become dull when one meditates for a longer period of time. Then one should change ones gaze and look upwards a bit. One can think that a white sphere of light above ones head rises up and up and up, so that ones mind becomes clear again. When ones mind is clear, one returns to the spot one was focusing on. Also, ones mind can become distracted and roam around during a meditation session. Then one should look downwards a bit. One can think that there is a dark sphere of light below ones cushion and it goes down, down, down. One needs to balance ones mind. When it's clear again, one returns to the spot one chose for that meditation session. If those techniques don't help, one can stand up and do walking meditation. If one has a big house or room, one can hang pictures on the walls and walk around the house as though it is a Stupa or around a statue that one placed in the middle of ones room. I didn't have much space in my room in my monastery, so I used to think and visualize this in my mind. This practice changes ones meditation.



Taking a statue or photo, that of Dorje Chang or a photo of the Bodhisattva drawn by His Holiness the XVIIth Gyalwa Karmapa in 2008 being very appropriate, one places it on ones shrine and at the right distance, not too far and not too close, and focuses ones attention on any point of the image. Of course, this depends upon how large the statue or image is. One directs ones attention on one point only and relaxes without focusing. After having completed ones practice, one dedicates the merit. If one has no specific dedication prayer to recite, one relaxes and dedicates whatever one wants. It might be quite good to just relax and think, “May everybody recognize the Mahamudra mind, the nature of the mind, the Buddha nature. May everybody be free of sickness and samsaric confusion and always be happy by resting in Mahamudra.”

I will speak a little more about shamata and then about special insight meditation, *vipassana* in Sanskrit - slowly, slowly. A practice that is important to do before starting to meditate is breathing exercises. One begins by cleansing ones breathing three times. When breathing in, one thinks one breathes in all positive energy that one can imagine. When breathing out, one thinks one breathes out all ones negative energy. One can think, “I’m breathing out. I’m breathing in.” One can speak this, but it’s sufficient to think it. After having done this three times, one breathes again slowly.

Mahamudra meditation is a real experience. Jetsün Milarepa said, “Look at your mind. When you look at your mind, you don’t see anything. When you don’t see anything, just relax.” That’s the meditation. In the same way, he said, “Look at your fear. When you look at your fear, you don’t see anything. When you don’t see your fear, just go and relax.” The same with anger and any other emotion. Now it’s very interesting. I will give an example so that it’s easier to understand in which way vipassana meditation is an experience.

One knows how a candy tastes if one puts it in ones mouth. One doesn't know how it tastes, no matter how much someone speaks about it, unless one tastes it oneself. One can't really describe how candy tastes, even if one uses the right words. One can't even think how a *Bonbon* ('candy' in German) tastes, because it's something one experiences and enjoys inside oneself. One can't experience a *Bonbon* by thinking, "Oh, yes. It is this, this, this." Vipassana meditation is the same. When one really looks how it is, it is like experiencing a *Bonbon* – words cannot explain it. That kind of meditation is needed here, which is meant when it is said to look at the subject and not at the object. The object comes through the subject - if one experiences it. If ones glasses are clean, then one experiences everything clearly. If they aren't clean, then one sees everything *durcheinander* ('chaotic, jumbled'). That's the subject and is how Mahamudra meditation works. Whatever one looks at while one has fear is different. Honestly speaking, it's very difficult to explain. When one really sees, one has to develop confidence in that one knows for certain, "That's it. I don't need more than that." Otherwise it doesn't work. One tries again and again and has doubts. If one sees, then even if the Buddha told one personally that one is doing the wrong meditation, one would know, "No, no. He's just kidding me." One needs that much confidence.

Experience and recognition are different, because experiences change all the time. Sometimes one experiences relaxation, sometimes ones experiences go up and down – that happens. Realization means things don't change that much, but one really knows the facts. For example, if one is speeding down the *Autobahn* (the 'freeway') and is photographed on a video, one has to pay the fine. One has heard a lot about videos on the *Autobahn*, but one still drives fast. One day one gets caught and ones mind becomes sharp due to having had to pay the fine. As of then, one knows that one should drive slowly when one reaches that spot on the *Autobahn* and becomes very mindful. Like that, ones mind should be very aware. Knowing isn't enough. That's how it should be in meditation. One has to really look at ones fear, for example, with ones wisdom-mind, just like one looks with a mindful and clear mind when driving down the *Autobahn*. Then one doesn't have a problem, drives good, doesn't have to pay a fine, everything goes well, and one is relaxed.

When fear or any emotion or negative thought arises in ones mind and one really looks at it, one doesn't find anything. Then there is no fear and one can relax. If one thinks of fear, one will have much fear. It's very interesting when one looks inwards, i.e., at the subject. The Mahamudra teachings say that all fear and emotions are self-liberated from the beginning – they are free and are quite okay. They are pure from the beginning, like pure water. Water is pure wherever it flows. But ones habits, ones concepts, cultural influences, etc. pollute it. In the same way, one pollutes ones mind in many ways. One merely creates ideas by thinking and then only turns around in circles. It's necessary to look directly at ones mind to cut concepts. When one looks directly, one sees that the thought of fear that one had is no fear. It may not work when one begins meditating, but there's a difference the more one tries. Beginners won't succeed when they have big fear, so they should practice when they have slight fear. That's vipassana meditation, which is difficult to explain. One doesn't think about it but looks and then one will see what one really experiences in the moment. In our example, something is going on when one eats chocolate candy and it's not possible to explain using words or by thinking. Something is going on, but one doesn't know until one has chocolate candy in ones mouth – then one knows. One can try to describe the taste and argue, "It tastes like cacao. No, it tastes a little bit like coffee." Somebody

else can say, “It tastes a little bit like Indian tee.” It’s very difficult to get it. If one has cacao and then a chocolate candy, one might know the difference. In vipassana meditation, one has to look directly at the subject when any kind of mind arises. If one looks directly at fear that one thinks one has, one finds no fear and relaxes in that. Let’s do another meditation.

One thinks of anything one wants to think about as much as possible. It doesn’t matter if the thought is good or bad, but one looks at it directly and checks if one finds anything. Getting a glimpse isn’t enough, so one has to practice looking at ones mind in the moment - again and again and again. While practicing, one shouldn’t wait for something to happen. One should look at how ones mind is the moment a thought arises. Jetsün Milarepa said, “One doesn’t see anything when one looks at ones mind. When one doesn’t see anything, just relax.”

In meditation, one doesn’t see what one wants to see, otherwise one sees what one likes to see and thinks what one likes to think. Something is going on when one meditates. One can’t say that there is nothing and one can’t say that something is there, either. For instance, one can give examples and describe how candy tastes, but one cannot really explain the taste. In meditation, one cannot say that one doesn’t see anything and one cannot say that one is seeing something, because one doesn’t know. One can’t say there is nothing, because one sees and experiences something. Meditation is not experiencing nothing, but concerns the how. One can’t say exactly how ones mind is, that it is like this or like that - like the experience of tasting chocolate candy. Therefore, one needn’t make preparations for ones meditation practice; if one does, one will never see ones mind. Simultaneity is needed. Vipassana meditation doesn’t work if one makes preparations, in which case one would wait and wait and wait. Special insight doesn’t take long but occurs simultaneously, i.e., faster than it takes to snap ones fingers. Simultaneity means looking at the moment one hears the sound of a snapping finger. It’s a very important meditation, otherwise ones meditation is wrapped up in too many concepts, too many ideas about meditation, too many methods.

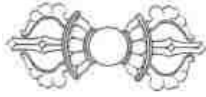
One doesn’t get into it if one has too many thoughts about how meditation should be. One can’t do anything about anger unless one looks at it. If one thinks of ones anger when it arises, one will be filled with anger. If one really looks at ones anger, though, one won’t find it. One only finds the possibility to relax, because there is no anger. If one doesn’t think it but looks honestly, one won’t find anything. One thinks that there are so many problems, so many things to be angry about, but there is nothing if one really looks. Vipassana meditation works like that. Looking directly at ones mind and just resting in it is the direct method of Mahamudra. So, one has to train simultaneity without making preparations. Then one can practice when one dies.

Nobody knows and can plan when they will die. So, one practices whenever something goes wrong. One practices when something goes wrong while one is asleep, too, and keeps ones mind resting in meditation. One keeps ones mind straight when something goes wrong with ones body. One doesn’t have to worry if ones mind is straight. Being preoccupied with waiting, ones meditation will not work and it will be too late when something like dying occurs. If one rests in meditation, then one can experience clarity in a storm or when one dies. No matter what happens, one keeps on trying. There are no deadlines. One doesn’t know whether death will happen in the next minute, hour, or the next day. Making preparations by practicing meditation, then it doesn’t matter what happens. It’s useless worrying that one will die, in which case one

only causes oneself to suffer and can't do anything about it. What can one do? Meditate in the moment and try ones best at any time. This was funny for me. I dreamed that I was dying. One really tries, even in ones dreams, and tells oneself, "Meditate, meditate, meditate." That's how strong ones meditation should be. Therefore Jetsün Milarepa and the great masters said, "Dying is nothing but a little enlightenment." If one rests in meditation when one dies, even if people around are crying, it happens like that. Therefore great meditators die in the meditation posture, because they are meditating and not dying. Although they behave in a crazy way, they don't hang around but know exactly what they are doing and can die easily. All great meditation masters probe into the subject and don't care much about objects. That's the aspect of meditation and we have to try all the time. One might think that dying is horrible but finds that it is very peaceful when one dies. So, this meditation plays a very important role. One can have interesting experiences in oneself if one looks at ones fear when it arises. One has to try like that. Don't wait until it's too late. Don't explain how it is. Don't try to think about it, because Mahamudra can't be experienced by thinking about it. Just be open with an aware mind and see directly how it is. When one sees it, one just rests in it. The longer one is able to rest in meditation, the better one can sustain that meditation well.

I think I talked a lot and normally it isn't necessary to talk. One has to practice. Let me present a short method. Whatever happens, just look at it nakedly and directly and try to rest. Don't wait to look, otherwise one has no time to look. So, give it a try, any time. Just look and don't think it. There are many things that depend upon what one likes. They are either complicated or simple. I think that sometimes it can be so simple that it can be complicating, because our mind is used to complicated things. The problem is that complicated things never end. So, somehow one has to find ones own conclusion to remain as simple as one can.

So, that's vipassana meditation. I didn't go into details and don't think it's needed. If nothing goes well in ones meditation, one can do Guru yoga. It's very important, because one needs the blessings. Why? Because one wants to experience something that isn't a target. A target is just an idea and one wants to become free of ideas. If one creates a target, one only experiences ones plan and that plan is only an idea that one already knows. Now one wants to experience something that one hasn't planned, which means not being bound to concepts. If one has no plan and practices, one can experience something one never thought before, which is the simultaneity of experience. So, one shouldn't plan but just look, otherwise one is trapped in a plan and cannot know if what one sees is a fact or not. For instance, if one is invited to a dinner party and has high expectations, one will be disappointed and then become upset if the food doesn't match ones expectations. If one goes to the dinner party without plans but is open, one doesn't lose ones appetite; one likes what one gets and isn't disappointed, upset, and angry. Meditation is something like that. This doesn't mean one should live *planlos* ('without plans'), but vipassana meditation is unconventional. One shouldn't mix up meditation practice with worldly concerns. If one trains meditating in an unconventional way, then one improves ones conventional way of living. For example, if one always thinks that life is very stressful and practices meditation, one discovers that life is meaningful. It means working inwardly, with the subject, and not outwardly, with objects. Meditation is all about working inwardly. The more one works inwardly, that much more automatically goes outwards, so one doesn't have to worry. Meditation works like that.



I haven't finished discussing shamata meditation. I will mix the teachings with special insight, which doesn't make sense if one doesn't meditate. One practices shamata meditation to make one's sixth mental consciousness peaceful and calm. The sixth mental consciousness is a little bit like a crazy monkey. In a song of realization, Jetsün Milarepa told one of his students, "You meditate like the ocean without waves" - the waves being like the monkey-mind. He also told his student, "You meditate like a mountain without trees" - the trees being like many thoughts that make one's mind busy. He also said, "You meditate like the clear sky, free of clouds." That is how one meditates in shamata. It means being still and free of too many waves on the surface of the ocean, too many trees on the slopes of a mountain, and too many clouds in the sky. As to special insight meditation, what should one do when too many waves arise in one's mind? One planned to meditate like a mountain without too many trees on its slopes, but many trees grew. One wanted to meditate like a sky without too many clouds, but so many clouds appeared. Insight meditation means working with the waves, trees, and clouds in meditation.

There are two kinds of meditation in Mahamudra: analytical meditation and direct-resting meditation. Analytical pertains to special insight meditation and means analyzing the subject, not the object, i.e., looking and being aware of what is occurring inside and not outside oneself. The first of four analytical meditations is called "cutting through the root of mind." For example, one wants to rest one's mind like an ocean without too many waves of anger, fear, thoughts, emotions, or feelings arising. One practices by first recognizing that one has fear, for example, by looking how it comes and grows in one's mind. One sees that it was strong, becomes weaker, grows again, etc. One looks at one's fear. If it stays, one looks to see how it stays, whether it has a colour and shape. When it ceases, one looks to see how. Does it stop like the flame of a candle that is blown out slowly or does it stop suddenly? One wants to look directly and very clearly. No answer is given in the text I am referring to, rather it is said that one hasn't looked so far and so one has fear. If one really wants to see any thought, emotion, good or bad thought that arises in one's mind, one has to look at and experience it directly. When one sees what a thought, emotion, or feeling is, then one rests and doesn't analyze anymore. One can rest in the nature of one's experience, without having any doubts. The method of resting the mind is described later on in the text and the two come together.

Sometimes one has too much fear, worries too much, or is too angry. Now one wants to look how they really are. When one looks, one might not find any anger and then one experiences peace. Before one thought about the anger one had and it increased. Now one wants to change that and wants to create what is called "a meditation network." How? Through special insight meditation. One really wants to experience how one's fear or anger come. One doesn't experience them if one thinks them, which is just thinking, but one looks directly with one's awareness, with one's open wisdom-mind. One wants to experience everything. If one has no fear when one looks, one looks why one doesn't have any fear. Then one sees that one is relaxed and asks, "How?" If there is no movement in the mind, no emotion, then one wants to experience how one's relaxed mind is. One wants to experience any situation, no matter what it is. Let us do a short meditation together.

One just relaxes and doesn't create anything in one's mind. When a thought arises, one doesn't get carried away by following after it – one just looks directly at it, is aware of it, and experiences how it is from the vantage point of the subject and not the object. When one relaxes, one looks to see who is relaxing and is experiencing relaxation. Yes, it is hard *Arbeit* ('work') trying to see without a target. Therefore I said, one has to think without thinking, have anger without being angry. Remember? That's what I am talking about here.

It's normal to have anger, to be fearful, and to worry. Nobody can claim to be free of those emotions. But if one really wants to look at them, one may not make any plans and have no target, rather really experience them. If one does, they tell a very interesting story that one has never imagined before. Now one wants to experience it. Fear has many stories to tell that one has blocked off – all the qualities of the Buddhas. One can experience this without creating a target and without plans. So, that's the method of meditation here.

One doesn't become a buddha just like that. Buddhahood occurs in every moment, but one has to experience it. *Buddha* means 'awakened.' One isn't awakened now, but one wants to be. So one practices being awake. One becomes awake to one's fear by looking at it. When one thinks about one's fear, for example, then one has blocked it off like in a dream. Whether good or bad, dreams are just dreams.

In Mahamudra meditation, one meditates Guru yoga, shamata, and vipassana. We looked at the analytical meditation of vipassana, which is the scholarly method of meditation. The second kind of vipassana is called "kushala meditation," 'direct-resting meditation.'

The first, analytical meditation, is the practice of carefully investigating and finding how one's mind arises, how it abides, and how it ceases. When one looks how one's mind arises, one finds that there is nothing to analyze. Something is there if one doesn't look, but the more one looks for it, the less one finds it. Whatever arises does so in dependence upon causes and conditions, is rootless, so nothing can arise. The moment one thinks something has arisen in one's mind and looks, one doesn't find anything. It's interesting, because something seems to be there when one doesn't look. No matter what - whether fear, worries, anger, and so forth -, one doesn't find anything when one really looks. One can never get the two together, the mind that looks and the experience of the mind. The moment one looks, another mind is there, so one sees less the more one looks. For instance, if one tries to look at one's anger, one doesn't see it and finds no root for it to arise. Then why be angry? Thus it is possible to just relax.

Again, if one doesn't look at anger the moment it arises in one's mind, it seems to be there, causes much irritation, and then everything circles around. If one looks, nothing is there and one can relax. Why dream anger? Why be confused by anger? Why be deluded by that atmosphere? This applies to fear or any thought and emotion. Sometimes one is so deluded by anger, takes the illusion to be real, and then becomes very tense. The more one looks at anger that one might have, the more one discovers that it is rootless and thus it's easier to relax and rest one's mind. For example, if one dreams of being chased by somebody, one experiences that one runs and runs and runs and suffers very much. If one recognizes that one's dream is a dream and not real while dreaming, then one doesn't suffer. If one doesn't recognize that one is dreaming while dreaming, one feels that one is suffering all night and even feels that one is suffering for a hundred years

while frightened and scared of being chased by somebody. That's how much one suffers. It's the same while awake. Anger, worries, fears are mental events – they are dreams. If one recognizes them, they aren't there. Then there's no suffering, nothing to fear, nothing to be angry or worried about. So, that's Mahamudra-vipassana meditation.

One should look and recognize one's anger, worries, and thoughts as dreams. One cannot think this but needs to apply meditation practice in the right way and wake up by looking. Then one doesn't find anything. It's like waking up from the dream that one was being chased by somebody and knowing that it was not real. Sometimes one follows the tracks of the illusion of anger, of fear, of worries, so in one's meditation one looks, recognizes them, wakes up, and doesn't fall into their trap – the trap of illusive anger, illusive fear, and so forth. Then anger doesn't evolve into more anger but brings peace, better said, relaxation. It's like that. Therefore, one needs to wake up. How? By looking directly and nakedly at anything that arises in one's mind. One doesn't find anything when one looks and can then relax. It's practical, but the theory is difficult to explain. So, whenever one is angry, one looks at it directly, straight-forwardly. One doesn't think, "How should I look?" Rather, one looks simultaneously, without making preparations.

When one really looks how anger abides, one can't say that it is red or green in colour. It's nothing like that. Some people say that anger is red, but one will never find that it has a colour if one really looks. You see, one will never find real anger. When it ceases, one can't say where it went. It leaves no traces like condensation trails that airplanes leave in the sky, showing the direction an airplane flew. How can one say where one's anger went when it disappears? One can know where a caravan went by looking at camels' footprints in the desert, but one cannot say of one's anger, "Oh, it went in this or that direction." The more one looks and meditates in that way, one won't find how a thought or emotion arises, how it abides, and how it ceases. If one doesn't look, one makes a strong illusion of anything that appears in one's mind. That illusion will take one everywhere one goes, and one can't run away from it. If one doesn't look and doesn't meditate on it, there's no way that one's illusion will disappear; on the contrary, it will only get worse. For example, one is very angry at a place and runs away. Slowly one will become angry again in the place one ran to. The place doesn't produce anger, rather one's habits. Places are neutral; they can be good or bad, which depends upon one's habits.

Mahamudra meditation means looking and meditating. Whenever anger arises, one meditates and then there is no anger. When one finds that one doesn't know how it arises, how it abides, and how it disappears, one is free from that illusion, free from that trail of anger. The nature of anger is not anger. The nature of anger is happiness. One thinks that anger is so bad, but it isn't. One creates anger out of illusion and then it's a problem. Fear as well. I'm just using anger as an example. -- If you have any questions, please ask.

**Question:** "The cause of anger is happiness?" **Lama Kelzang:** That's an easy way of saying it. Normally, we say that the nature of the mind is luminous clarity. I gave the example of it being like clean glasses. Every mind is like that, and that nature is happiness. But one smudges the glasses because one is dreaming and then one gets *durcheinander* ('mixed up') in illusion-traps. The nature of anger has two aspects: emptiness and clarity. They are indivisible and can never be said to be separate. It's possible to be angry and happy because everything is empty of an own



nature, so emptiness is one aspect of the nature of both anger and happiness. At the same time, one can rest in the aspect of one's mind that is luminous clarity. When one looks, one feels relaxed and joyful. If one is joyful, one is kinder to others. One doesn't have to think, "How can I be kind?" One isn't angry about anything one sees but is naturally kind. One doesn't think, "Oh, I should meditate on kindness. How should I think?" That's not needed. It happens simultaneously. One is so happy when one is very relaxed and then one is kind. Everything one says will be kind. It's impossible and quite difficult to be kind when one is unhappy. One is naturally kind when one is happy. Then one can do what others request. If one is unhappy, one tells those who ask for help, "No, no, no."

**Next question:** "I have three questions. We look at anger, but should we also look at love and joy in the same way?" **Lama Kelzang:** Yes, everything. Joy might turn into suffering again. We want ultimate joy, not just temporary joy. **Same student:** "Concerning looking, you said that one doesn't look at the object but at the subject. Isn't anger an object?" **Lama Kelzang:** When it is said to look at anger, it is referring to the mind that is angry. The subject is the person who experiences anger. **Same student:** "Nightmares can be a sign of trauma and tell us that something hasn't been resolved. What does one do about a trauma?" **Lama Kelzang:** Yes, it is true that a bad atmosphere one had during the day or traumatic experiences appear in dreams. But one has to wake up from a traumatic illusion, too, otherwise it will carry on through one's whole life and cause many problems. One has to end a trauma and start a new life. One can't hold on to the past – it's gone. Why carry on with something for the rest of one's life that happened when one was a child? It's a matter of switching one's mind, which is possible. Otherwise one will die with the trauma on one's mind, which would be too much. Nobody hurts one but oneself. The trauma will carry on into the next life if one doesn't change it, and it will become worse. So one has to cut it down now, and that's why one has to wake up.

**Next question:** "Is it possible to overcome physical pain through this method of meditation, so that one doesn't have to take medicine?" **Lama Kelzang:** Normally, yes, but we are beginners and shouldn't try that. One should work with both, meditation and medication when one is sick or has pain. A great practitioner can deal with pain. A great Vajrayana master said, "I'm happy when suffering comes. I don't have to go to a doctor for medicine when I am sick. Why? Because I can transform pain and sickness into a different atmosphere. I am happy when things go up and down, because I can practice." Meditation masters can deal with all situations, so they have no problem. We are beginners, though, and should not challenge that. Now, one should be very careful and do both, meditate and take medication when one is sick or in pain. One's mind is very tricky. One understands but doesn't experience. If one really experiences, then it doesn't matter. Therefore, one takes medicine and meditates when one is sick or has pain. Then it works even faster. Let me tell my own story.

Once I thought I wouldn't be able to teach while on the way to Hamburg to give teachings on mindfulness and dealing with stress, because I had such a bad headache. I was in so much stress on that day. I had no choice, so I had to begin teaching when I arrived. We meditated a lot and somehow my headache disappeared. It was very interesting for me and therefore now I have the experience and know that I should relax as much as possible when I have a headache. But I think it's better to take medicine and to relax in meditation at the same time. It's easy. As long as one's meditative experience is slight, one needs to take medicine.

We went through the scholars' way of engaging in analytical meditation. Now I want to speak about how to practice kushula meditation, resting ones mind in direct meditation.

One sits in the seven positions of the Vairocana posture, thus being physically comfortable and at ease. After having looked at ones mind and not having found anything, the text states:

*“Rest the mind in its true nature, free of effort and mental fabrications, like a great eagle soaring through the sky.”*

Free of effort means not thinking, “How should I rest? How should I meditate?” Like an eagle flying in the sky, one just flies. Ones meditation breaks down if, as in the analogy, one flaps ones wings too much. One just flies. The second method mentioned in the text is:

*“Rest evenly in the mind itself, like a lake, free of the movement of waves.”*

One doesn't bring information into ones mind, one doesn't make plans, one doesn't think of the past or future, one doesn't think that one is so peaceful, one doesn't even think that one is meditating when one meditates, but one is free of concepts and distractions and just rests. Otherwise one is busy and isn't meditating. Then the text states:

*“Rest while holding an all-illuminating radiance, like the sun and moon, free of clouds.”*

Resting meditation means being very clear. It doesn't mean that one has no consciousness, no mindfulness, no awareness. Meditation also doesn't mean being nihilistic or not feeling anything, even if pricked by a needle. Meditation also doesn't mean being lost in a state of unconsciousness, like in a faint or in deep sleep. Meditation means that ones mind rests in its aspect of clarity and is relaxed at the same time. One doesn't think it. What I mean to say is that one rests in the clear atmosphere of ones mind. If ones mind is unclear, it's good to prick oneself with a needle a little bit to make it clear.

Great meditation masters go to meditate in scary places, like on an island in the middle of a big lake or on high mountain cliffs and tie themselves to a rock so that they don't succumb to illusions. For instance, if someone seems to appear and invites them to come along, they wake up from the illusion by being held back by their meditation belt. Or while meditating in a cave on a rocky mountain slope, there is the illusion that everything around is a grassy field they want to walk on, so they are held back by the belt and thus wake up from the illusion.

What I mean to say here is that ones awareness needs to be stronger, which is how the luminous quality of ones mind is. Signs of meditation are that ones mind is sharp, clear, more intuitive, and intelligent. If one meditates and ones mind is dull and not clear and intelligent, it means ones meditation isn't working. One becomes sharper, more intelligent, and knows everything in details if ones meditation is going well. One knows everything when ones mind is clear, just like the sun. One sees everything when the sun shines clearly. One doesn't even see what is nearby in the fog.

You see, the Buddha meditated like that and he knows everything. Buddha is free of all illusions and sees everything clearly, because his mind is clear. Therefore, great meditation masters can see everybody's mind, because they are clear. Like His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa, he sees everything when he recognizes other Tulkus. Even if he has never been to the place of their birth, he draws a map, describes what the place looks like, writes down the father's name, the mother's name, how many members are in the family. He sees everything clearly and writes it down. A Buddha knows ones previous life – he knows everything. If he wrote down ones entire life, he would have a lot to tell. He is enlightened and has a clear mind. -- Thank you very much.

### Dedication Prayers

Through this goodness may omniscience be attained  
 And thereby may every enemy (mental defilement) be overcome.  
 May beings be liberated from the ocean of samsara  
 That is troubled by waves of birth, old age, sickness, and death.

### Long-Life Prayer for His Holiness the XVIIth Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, composed by His Eminence the XIIth Goshir Gyaltshab Rinpoche

། མི་ཐུང་རྟག་པ་རང་བྱུང་ཚེས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ། །སྐྱེ་འཕྱུལ་གཟུགས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་བ་ཞེང་ས་གཟུང་པའི། །  
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Naturally arising Dharmakaya, unchanging and ever-present,  
 Karmapa, you appear as the form kayas' magical illusions.  
 May your three secret vajras remain stable in the realms  
 And your infinite, spontaneous activity blaze in glory.



The instructions that Lama Kelzang Wangdi generously offered in English were simultaneously translated into the German language by Hannelore Wenderoth, who we wish to thank very much for her fabulous work. Gratitude to Lama Dorothea Nett for having organized the event, for having recorded the teachings & for having made them available. Photo of His Holiness & the mural painted by His Holiness in 2008 courtesy of Hwayue in Taiwan. Tibetan script of the prayer for the long life of His Holiness given to us by Khenpo Karma Namgyal from Nepal. Photo of Lama Kelzang courtesy of Josef Kerklau from Münster. Photo of tulips taken in 2009 in St. Petersburg by Lena Fong from San Francisco & graciously offered for this article. Seminar transcribed, edited slightly & arranged for the website of KCCCL & Karma Lekshey Ling Institute in Nepal by Gaby Hollmann from Munich, responsible for all mistakes. Copyright Lama Kelzang Wangdi & Karma Chang Chub Choepel Ling, Heidelberg, June 2009. All rights reserved. Distributed for personal use only.