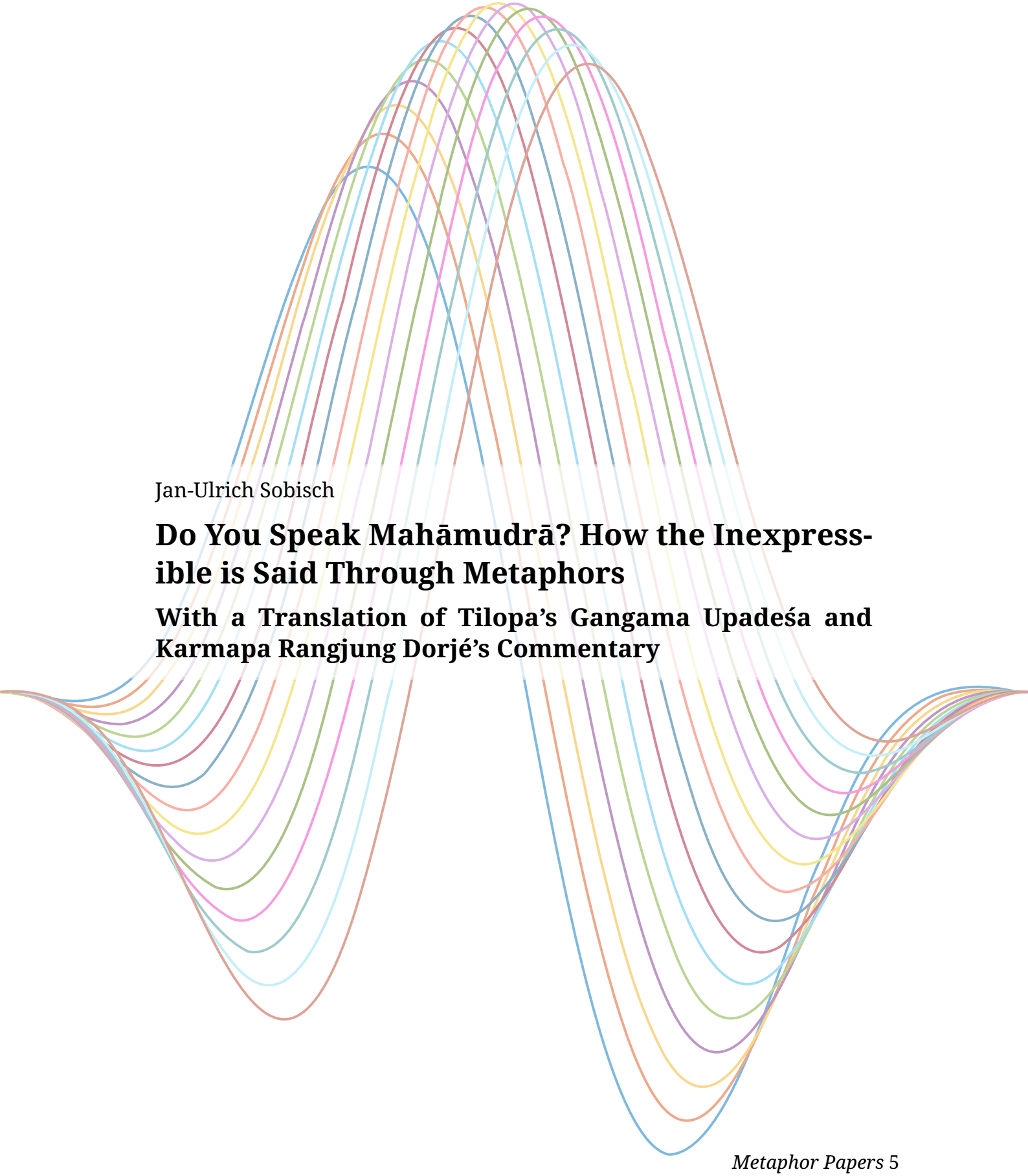


Jan-Ulrich Sobisch

Do You Speak Mahāmudrā? How the Inexpressible is Said Through Metaphors

With a Translation of Tilopa's Gangama Upadeśa and Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé's Commentary

Metaphor Papers 5

Metaphor Papers is a Working Paper Series by the Collaborative Research Center 1475 “Metaphors of Religion”. In the *Metaphor Papers*, the CRC documents preliminary findings, work-in-progress and ongoing debates and makes them available for discussion.

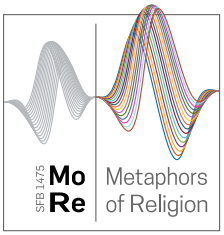
Please cite as:
Jan-Ulrich Sobisch. “Do You Speak Mahāmudrā? How the Inexpressible is Said Through Metaphors. With a Translation of Tilopa’s Gangama Upadeśa and Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé’s Commentary.” *Metaphor Papers* 5 (2023). https://doi.org/10.46586/mp.260.

ISSN 2942-0849

Ruhr-Universität Bochum / Karlsruher Institut für Technologie
Collaborative Research Center 1475 “Metaphors of Religion”

https://sfb1475.ruhr-uni-bochum.de
https://omp.ub.rub.de/index.php/metaphorpapers

The CRC “Metaphors of Religion” is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG; German Research Foundation) – SFB 1475 – Project ID 441126958.



Funded by
DFG
Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft
German Research Foundation

DOI: 10.46586/mp.260
License: Creative Commons Attribution 4.0

Metaphor Papers 5 (2023)

Do You Speak Mahāmudrā? How the Inexpressible is Said Through Metaphors

With a Translation of Tilopa's Gangama Upadeśa and Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé's Commentary

Jan-Ulrich Sobisch

ABSTRACT Mahāmudrā is a Buddhist practice system that originated in India and was transmitted in various forms and through various channels to Tibet. The transmission discussed in this paper teaches the direct observation of the mind, which is a paradox: Apart from being "like space," the mind has no characteristics; thus, nothing can really be looked at. Ultimately, the mind is considered to be "seen" when all "seeing" is completely exhausted by a practice that looks at the mind in the manner of looking into boundless und unveiled space. Tilopa's basic text of the *Gangama* teaches the stopping of all thought-like mental activities as the principal method. The Third Karmapa's commentary introduces a second method, where the thought-like activities are not stopped but watched while investigating where thoughts come from, where they stay, and where they disappear to. As a result, the practitioner understands that thoughts are not different from the space-like mind like waves are not different from the ocean, and with this realization, all thoughts disappear. Because of their high density of metaphors, the texts of Tilopa and the Karmapa lend themselves to investigating how language in religious use emerges from metaphors. The primary metaphors can be summarized as *space* and *movement*, including *being fettered*, *loosening*, and *becoming free*. Another essential metaphor is *clarity* as a sub-category of *space*, in the sense of *unobstructed* or *unveiled*, as well as *clear*, *empty*, and *naked*. An important observation is that the metaphors are often initially apophatic—often negations—whereas the derived ones tend to be neutral or positive. The meaning that emerges then often takes on an abstract cataphatic form (*space*, *free*, *nature*). We can also observe that the two different approaches, stopping thoughts or using thoughts for the practice, seem to prefer different metaphors, e.g., with the connotation of a static "openness" and "expansiveness" (*space*, *sky*) or with a dynamic "inclusiveness" (*waves* and *water*). Analyzing metaphors enables us to decipher the complex meaning of a whole doctrinal system. We can develop a perspective on a religious system of meaning by analyzing the types of metaphors that are used—dynamic/static, negative/positive, apophatic/cataphatic, etc.—and the developments and derivations that can be observed in them—e.g., from dynamic to static or from negative to positive.

KEYWORDS Mahāmudrā, sahajayoga, apophatic, cataphatic, dynamic, static metaphors

Introduction: Teaching Mahāmudrā by Metaphor[1]

This paper investigates how the Indian master of the eleventh century, Tilopa, teaches mahāmudrā in the *Mahāmudrā Upadeśa*, also known as the *Gangama*, and how the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé commented upon that.[2] The text of the *Gangama* is known to us through its Tibetan translation by the great translator and first Tibetan in the Kagyü tradition, Marpa Lotsāva Chökyi Lodrö, who had received it in an aural transmission from Tilopa's famous disciple Nāropa.[3] About two and a half centuries after Marpa, the Third Karmapa's commentary gives us insights into the way the mahāmudrā teachings were handled in the Kagyü tradition after Gampopa, the learned disciple of Marpa's greatest disciple, the yogi and hermit Milarepa (see fig. 1). [1]

I believe I can show through my analysis that Tilopa's *Gangama* was, firstly, intended for disciples of the highest capacity—and in such a way that the possibility of a "sudden" or "instantaneous awakening" resonates in the background—and, secondly, that the text was completely in the tradition of the teaching of "no mental activity" (Skt. *amanasikara*, Tib. *yid la mi byed pa*) and thereby of a "single method." However, these two points made this text quite problematic for the Kagyüpas. The "instantaneous awakening" and, especially, the commitment to a single method of meditative practice, namely "no mental activity," were discredited by the polemics of one of the most prominent scholars of the rival Sakyapa tradition, Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251). He claimed that such a form of meditative practice would be "Chinese" rather than "purely Indian," and thus, allegedly, not originally Buddhist.[4] Apart from this problem, the exclusive targeting of the text to disciples of the highest ability also implies a limitation that would jeopardize the wide dissemination of this jewel among Tilopa's teachings. Thus, by adding through his commentary to the *Gangama* an element of a more gradual awakening with a greater variety of means, namely in the form of the "yoga of the inborn" (Skt. *sahajayoga*, Tib. *lhan cig skyes sbyor*) as taught by Gampopa, the Third Karmapa ensured that the Gangama could remain one of the most popular teachings of the Kagyu tradition. [2]

This paper will pay special attention to the use of metaphors in the *Gangama* and its commentary. After introducing the text and the structure of Tilopa's *Gangama*, I will discuss several key metaphors of both texts. Here, my thesis will be that the metaphors [3]

1 I would like to thank Carmen Meinert for her careful review of this article. Her critical follow-up questions have helped to draw some important conclusions, however preliminary they may be. I would also like to thank Claude Jürgens, who helped to clear up many inconsistencies and improve the translations, and corrected and edited the Tibetan texts.

2 Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje. For details on these texts, see the next section "the texts."

3 Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros. The dates of the Indian master Nāropa are problematic, but there is no doubt that Nāropa's and Marpa's lives overlapped. For the controversies about their dates, see Ducher (2017).

4 Sakya Pandita, for example, said: "The present-day Great Seal … is virtually [the same as] the Chinese religious system." *Clear Differentiation* (*sDom gsum rab dbye*) 3.167–75; translation by Rhoton (2002, 118–19). His remarks are in the aftermath of the Samyé debate that supposedly took place in Tibet in the eighth century between the Indian master Kamalaśīla (ca. 740–795) and the Chinese master Hoshang Mohoyen. Apart from the few remarks on the debate that I will make below, see for overviews, e.g., Seyfort Ruegg (1989), and Sam van Schaik's internet blog "Early Tibet" (https://earlytibet.com/, accessed August 11, 2023). On the tensions between the Sakyapas and the Kagyüpas in this matter, see D. P. Jackson (1994).

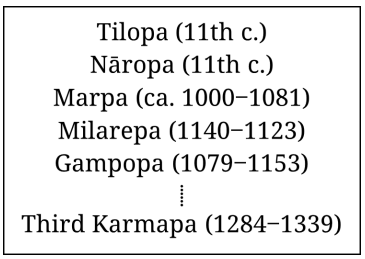


Figure 1 Early Masters of the Kagyü tradition of Tibetan Buddhism

by which "not thinking" is taught in the *amanasikara* tradition differ from those that teach practicing with thoughts in the *sahajayoga* tradition. How they differ will help us understand how metaphors contribute to the formation of language in religious use.[5] In general, if we succeed in clearly assigning certain metaphors to certain doctrinal traditions, we can use metaphor analysis to trace doctrinal traditions through different textual layers.

The paper also documents an outline (*sa bcad*)[6] of Tilopa's *Gangama* composed by the [4]
Karmapa. Such an outline, probably a genre invented by Tibetans, is immensely helpful in understanding how the outline's author reads the text. In our case, it reveals two interesting viewpoints of the Karmapa. First, he perceives two separate passages of direct mahāmudrā instructions in Tilopa's text. He calls the first "meditative practice" (section 2.2.2: *bsgom pa*) and the second "training" (2.2.7: *nyams len*, with further subdivisions). The first appears to be the direct introduction for those disciples with supreme capacity who realize mahāmudrā rapidly by entering "all at once" the state of mind outlined briefly there and then quickly familiarizing themselves with it. By calling the other section a "training," the Karmapa seems to highlight that the *Gangama* is also relevant for practitioners of a more gradual path.

The second interesting viewpoint visible through the Karmapa's outline is how he [5]
differentiates the practices for those of medium and lower faculties from the above direct instruction of the supreme disciples. I will argue that the Karmapa considered the yogas involving practices of the winds (*vāyu*) and involving a consort (*karmamudrā*) to be, respectively, for students of medium and lowest capacity.

The Texts

The second part of the paper contains the basic text of Tilopa's *Gangama* and the [6]
Karmapa's commentary, both with my translation. I have described the complicated history of Tilopa's *Gangama Mahāmudrā* in two papers (2018b, 2019). Suffice it to say here that according to its colophon in Marpa's works, it was transmitted orally by its author, Tilopa, to the Indian master Nāropa at the bank of the River Ganges (hence its popular name *Gangama*), who then transmitted it in the same way, namely orally, to

5 The creation of meaning in religious usage through metaphors is the research subject of our Collaborative Research Centre 1475 at the Ruhr University Bochum. The joint sub-project of Carmen Meinert and myself within the CRC mainly focuses on the genre of Tibetan *mahāmudrā* instructions.

6 All references to the original language are to the Tibetan language unless otherwise noted.

the Tibetan translator Marpa. Its first appearance in written form is in the Collected Works of Marpa (1:368–70) and in a collection of Indian Mahāmudrā works in Tibetan translation, the *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* (*rGya*, *Collection of Indian Mahāmudrā Texts*, 85–90). We must note here that the original version of the Karmapa's commentary only contains the respective first and last lines of the *Gangama* passages he comments upon. Strictly speaking, we cannot know which version of the basic text he read when he gave his comments. However, both these first and last lines and evidence found in the comments indicate that he had before his eyes a version of Tilopa's text that must have been very close to the (paracanonical)[7] text transmitted in Kongtrul Rinpoche's *Treasury of Pith Instructions* (*mDzod*). The text of the *Gangama* that I reproduce here is, therefore, largely the text of *mDzod*, except for the few cases where variants are apparent. The text of the Karmapa's commentary is that of the 2006 edition of the collected works of the Third Karmapa.

Until recently, the Third Karmapa's commentary on the *Gangama* was the first datable [7]
appearance of the *Gangama* in Tibet. Another probably ancient manuscript tradition would be the *Collection of Indian Mahāmudrā Texts* (*rGya*). It contains several mahāmudrā works that have been collected in the Drikung Kagyü tradition and that are said to have been transmitted by Marpa Lotsāva Chökyi Lodrö.[8] However, with the recent rediscovery and publication of the collected works of Marpa, we now possess the probably oldest Tibetan version of the *Gangama*. The three versions of the basic text mentioned above—the *rGya*, the text preserved in the Third Karmapa's commentary,[9] and the edition in the Collected Works of Marpa—follow the structure found in the paracanonical traditions of the *Gangama*. Another paracanonical version would be the aural transmissions whose origin is attributed to the Buddhist tantric deities Cakrasaṃvara and Vajraḍākaṇī.[10]

The Structure of the *Gangama*

The compilation of treatises of Indian Buddhist masters, the *Tenjur* (*bstan 'gyur*), began [8]

7 I differentiate between the original paracanonical transmission of the *Gangama* and the heavily redacted post thirteenth century canonical versions; see the next section on the "Structure of the *Gangama*" and Sobisch (2018b); Sobisch (2019).

8 The texts of this *rGya gzhung* collection are not identical with the texts of the similarly titled Pelpung (*dpal spungs*) block print collection compiled by the seventh Karmapa Chödrag Gyatso and described by Mathes (2006b).

9 This, as mentioned above, consists of the opening and closing lines of the sections it is commenting and is closest to the *mDzod*.

10 According to the tradition, the "Aural Transmission of Cakrasaṃvara" or, alternatively, "of the Ḍākinī" was received by Tilopa directly from the ḍākinīs. He transmitted it to Nāropa and the latter to his Tibetan disciple Marpa, who passed them on to Milarepa. As Marta Sernesi points out in her paper (2011), the "Aural Transmission of Rechung" and "Aural Transmission of Ngendzong" are names for particular lineages in which the instructions were transmitted after Mila (Rechungpa and Ngendzongpa were cotton clad yogis of Mila's retinue). There also appears to be a further lineage through Gampopa and Phagmodrupa (Larsson 2012, 88), the "Aural Transmission of Dakpo," possibly with abridged or essential instructions (Sernesi 2011, 180n2). According to Padma Karpo's (1527–1592) introduction and catalog of the Aural Transmission of the Ḍākinī (*mKha' 'gro snynan brgyud kyi dpe tho*, Torricelli 2000, 361), the Gangama is the first text of the collection (as arranged by him), and it is its essential instruction (see Sobisch 2018b, 2019).

in Tibet during the fourteenth century, shortly after the Third Karmapa's time, who was active more than 150 years after Gampopa. It is quite surprising to see how heavily the editors of the different *Tenjur* editions interfered with Tilopa's text when they included it in their collection. Not only have they cut the free irregular meter to a uniform verse structure of nine syllables, but they have also restructured the whole text in a way that I can only describe as sabotaging the essence of Tilopa's treatise. As is visible in the original paracanonical versions, Tilopa conceived his text as an instruction for practitioners of the highest capacity. And although that fact is not explicitly mentioned, up to line 55, the *Gangama* can indeed be considered an instruction for instantaneous or simultaneous (*cig car*) entering into the ultimate state, to which the supreme yogi then only has to familiarize himself. Beyond that, it is still a practice for practitioners of the highest capacity, but now the instructions provide slightly more detail. Only from line 99 onwards do we get, according to the Karmapa's analysis in his *Outline* (*sa bcad*), a mere nine lines (out of a total of 112) with instructions for persons of medium and lower capacity.

[9] The *Tenjur* editors turned this treatise upside down into a "gradual path" (*lam rim*) type of text: While Tilopa had pointed out the nature of the mind through examples (lines 5–37) right at the beginning of his treatise, the editors of the canon relegated this very heart of the instruction to the end of the text. We must assume that they have done so because, to them, the structure of the paracanonical version(s) of the *Gangama* with its simultaneist flavor was too reminiscent of the Chinese Master Hoshang Mohoyen's position at the Samyé debate. The editors of the canon deemed the Hoshang's teaching of simultaneous entry to have been refuted through the gradualist position of the Indian master Kamalaśīla.

[10] Much has been written about the debate at Samyé, and no matter whether a debate has actually ever occurred there, the Tibetan historical tradition itself has later constructed it as one of the defining moments of Tibetan religious history. For the present purpose, it is chiefly important to be aware of the fact that scholars like Sakya Pandita in Tibet have used the Samyé debate—as they constructed it—as an argument against forms of mahāmudrā that employ only a single means ("no mental activity") and have a flavor of simultaneous awakening. Sakya Pandita polemicized against his Kagyüpa opponents by accusing all mahāmudrā teachings that were not based on tantric initiation, on a multitude of means, and on a strictly gradual approach to be of Chinese origin. He insinuated that, although long refuted, they were continuations of the Hoshang's teachings.

[11] By the time of the Third Karmapa in the fourteenth century, the *Gangama* must therefore have represented the exact thing that the Sakyapa so severely criticized. As I will argue below, I believe that the Karmapa introduced the style of the "yoga of the inborn" (Skt. *sahajayoga*) through his commentary to shield the *Gangama* against criticism and, at the same time, make it accessible to a broader audience that was naturally oriented towards gradualism. However, whereas the Karmapa had done this without interfering with the structure of the text, thus preserving the original flavor of

the text while adding a new one through his commentary, the *Tenjur* editors more or less obliterated anything that had even the appearance of simultaneity by forcing the text into the straightjacket of the gradualists.

As we can see from the Karmapa's *Outline* of Tilopa's text, he conceived the actual text primarily as consisting of instructions on [12]

(1) view (*lta ba*, lines 5–29), [13]
(2) conduct (*spyod pa*, 30–32),
(3) meditative practice (*sgom pa*, 33–37),
(4) pledges (*dam tshig*, 38–47),
(5) benefits (*phan yon*, 48–52),
(6) defects (*nyes dmigs*, 53–55), and
(7) training (*nyams len*, 56–107).

The direct introduction to the nature of the mind is contained right at the beginning in section (1) on "view" (lines 5–29). Note that sections (3) and (7) are both about practice but use different terms, namely "meditative practice" (*sgom pa*) and "training" (*nyams len*). Section (3) can be considered a practice instruction for persons able of instantaneous realization or who need only very little instruction. It contains only three lines (33–35) that say that without abandoning or establishing anything, one should loosen the mind in a state where body and mind are understood to be without essence and like the center of space and rest in it—that is Tilopa's most essential instruction on mahāmudrā practice. It reminds one of many similarly brief instructions, such as these "four points" by Saraha (as preserved in Jigten Sumgön's *Mahāmudrā Thunderbolt*):[11] [14]

Relax body and mind. [15]
Do not engage in mental objects.
Do not set up any support whatsoever.
Release the mind in its natural state.

However, since persons other than disciples of outstanding supreme capacity cannot practice like that, topic 7 provides instructions for training with preparations and several graded sections. Here, the training instructions are still for persons with sharp faculties and high capacity, but the instructions are provided in more detail (lines 82–95).[12] The text ends with a few instructions for people of medium (lines 99–102) and lower capacities (lines 103–107). Through this analysis of Tilopa's text, it becomes clear that the Third Karmapa considered the mahāmudrā instructions of "no mental activity" and the "inborn nature" to be superior to the yogas involving practices of the winds (Skt. *vāyu*), which are, as we will see, for disciples of medium capacity. In particular, he considers the practices involving a consort (Skt. *karmamudrā*) for disciples of the lowest capacity.[13] [16]

11 Collected Works of Jigten Sumgon (2:426–427).
12 Lines 96–98 provide an overview of the different capacities.
13 It should be noted here that all these practices stem from the mantra tradition, which is considered to be only for disciples of the highest capacity. But within that, disciples are again graded as those of supreme, medium, and lowest capacities. However, the views on which practices are for higher

Metaphors in Mahāmudrā Instructions

Tilopa's instructions and the Karmapa's comments have several features that deserve discussion. Most importantly, the language of these texts, rich in metaphors, is striking. The sheer number of metaphors alone is overwhelming. If we only take lines 5–7 of the *Gangama*, almost every noun, adjective, and verb is a metaphor (underlined): [17]

> 5 As, for example, space—what is supported on what? [18]
> 6 In mahāmudrā, your mind has no object to rest on.
> 7 Relax in the unfabricated innate state and rest [in that]!

In all these cases, we can analyze a structural mapping from a source to a target domain.[14] One could say, for example, that when one is instructed to relax the mind, a concept from the domain of mechanics (or, one could say, from the human locomotor system) is mapped onto the domain of consciousness (or the mental domain). The way this mapping creates new meaning is of great interest for the creation of language and meaning in religions. Of the vast numbers of metaphors in the two texts under investigation, I would like to single out here only a few to show how they profoundly impact the deeper meaning of these texts. However, the *Gangama* will be one of the core texts under investigation in our sub-project of the Collaborative Research Center mentioned above, and I expect to analyze a significant number of other metaphors from it. In the present paper, however, I will discuss mainly the following metaphors: [19]

> In the "view" section (lines 5–29): [20]
> space (*nam mkha'*)
> fetter (*bcings pa*)
> becoming free (*grol ba*)
> clear/clarity (*gsal*)
> clear light (*'od gsal*)
> waves (*rba*, *rba rlabs*)

> In the "meditative practice" section (33–37): [21]
> space (*nam mkha'*)

and lower disciples differ. Morover, I do not subscribe to the widespread idea that all mahāmudrā teachings of the Kagyüpa that are not linked to a specific tantra are "sūtra mahāmudrā." This category is a rather late invention and probably goes back to a taxonomy of the nineteenth century master Kongtrul Lodrö Thayé. Gampopa himself has never used the term. It is, in hindsight, probably justified to apply it to Maitripa's attempts to tie mahāmudrā to a *madhyamaka* kind of emptiness (Mathes 2006a, 207). The type of mahāmudrā that is taught by Tilopa in the *Gangama* is well-described by Gampopa's category "taking direct perception (*mngon sum*) as the path," in contrast to "taking blessing (*byin rlabs*) as the path" (= mantra) and "taking inference (*rjes dpag*) as the path" (= sūtra). See for these categories his *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs*, Derge edition, vol. *cha*, fol. 15v. However, in the same work, Gampopa says that it is characteristic for mantra "to take the actual, direct object (*don dngos*) as the path," which is similar to taking direct perception as the path. This is in contrast to sūtra, where one takes the "object universal" (*don spyi*) as the object (fol. 7r). Based on the latter taxonomy, one could argue that for Gampopa, the *Gangama*'s approach would be mantra since it teaches a direct approach to mahāmudrā (see also Sobisch 2011, 222–225).

14 "[…] a metaphor is a structural mapping from one domain of subject matter (the source domain) to another (the target domain)" (see Lakoff 1986, 294).

In the "pledges" section (38–47): [22]
clear light (*'od gsal*)
waves (*rba*, *rba rlabs*)
ocean (*rgya mtsho*)

In the "benefit" section (48–52): [23]
becoming free (*grol ba*)

In the "training" section 56–107): [24]
becoming free (*grol ba*)
clear light (*'od gsal*)
unborn (*skye med*)
root of the mind (*sems kyi rtsa ba*)
boundless (*mu mtha' yongs grol*, *mtha' med*)
deep (*gting*)
vast (*yangs*)
released (*grol*)
waterfall (*gcong rong*)
River Ganges (*chu bo ganggā*)
ocean (*rgya mtsho*)
winds (Skt. *vāyu*, Tib. *rlung*)

Due to a lack of space and sufficient study, I cannot provide the same depth of treatment to all of these metaphors. Some of them, however, will play a prominent role in discussing my thesis that different approaches to mahāmudrā attract different metaphors. [25]

From here onwards, my presentation will analyze the metaphors of the *Gangama* more or less in a line-by-line manner. The presentation will also include the following four excursions with discussions of particular topics that emerge in the course of the text: [26]

1. Ethical problems of mahāmudrā in the context of "view" and "conduct" [27]
2. The ineffability of the absolute and the power of metaphors in this context
3. The two mahāmudrā systems of "no mental activity" *vs.* "yoga of the inborn"
4. The path and fruit orientation of these two systems

The Metaphor *Space* (lines 5–7)

The space metaphor is the most fundamental metaphor of Tilopa's teaching and is generally of much interest in Buddhism. Before I discuss it in the context of the *Gangama*, let me provide some examples of a similar usage at other times and in other forms of Buddhism. The Indian master Saraha eludes all attempts to date him, but the literature attributed to him can be placed to the period of the arising of the Buddhist tantras starting around the 7th century. He is credited with these words: [28]

> Grasp the mind as being like space, [29]
> grasp it as being like the nature of space![15]
>
> Who should not know that the mind, which gives rise to illusory appearances, [30]
> [is like] the center of boundless space?[16]
>
> Look again and again at the nature of the mind, which, like space, is pure [31]
> from the beginning, and the seeing will cease.[17]

We do not only find this in Indian and Tibetan mahāmudrā instructions. Similar [32] thoughts can also be found in Dzogchen in the late ninth century:

> [Mind] cannot be worked upon; cannot be stabilized, since, like space, it lacks [33]
> constituents.[18]

Similarly, also in China, where a ca. ninth-century text attributed to Bodhidharma [34] says (Meinert 2017, 258):

> Because mind is no-mind, it is called Dharma mind. Today's practitioners [35]
> understand this as the destruction of all delusions. Mind is like space, inde-
> structible, and therefore it is called the adamantine mind.

Saraha uses the metaphorical power of "space" to show the mind to be spacious, pure, [36] and "like the center of boundless space." The image widely used in these texts—the center of boundless space—is a paradox within a metaphor. "Space" is understood in Tibetan Buddhism as an endless expanse, but such an expanse cannot have a center because a center is only conceivable in terms of recognizable boundaries. Thus, when you look for such a mind that is like the center of boundless space, you discover that it is not there—there is nothing to be looked at, no point of fixation. Thereby one exhausts looking and, consequently, "seeing comes to an end." This explanation carries two important messages: The mind cannot be seen, but trying to see it is necessary, since through the exhaustion of trying to see it, the "seeing"—a metaphor for cognitive activity, which according to Saraha and general Mahāyāna is the creator of illusion—will cease. The Dzogchen quote already formulates this conclusion: You cannot practice the mind because there is nothing in it to focus on. A similar point is made by Bodhidharma, who therefore calls the mind "no-mind." The fact taught by Saraha that trying to see something that does not exist exhausts seeing was also explained by Gampopa, based on one of Saraha's *dohā* instructions:[19]

15 *sems ni nam mkha' 'dra bar gzung bya ste// nam mkha'i rang bzhin nyid du sems gzung bya//* (Tibetan text according to R. R. Jackson 2004, 74).

16 *sgyu mar snang [m]khan sems nyid nam [m]kha'i ste// mtha[']* bral dbus mar sus kyang shes mi 'gyur// (Tibetan text according to Stenzel 2008, 78).

17 *Dohakoṣagīti*, D 51, 72r: *gdod nas dag pa nam mkha'i rang bzhin// bltas shing bltas shing mthong ba 'gag par 'gyur//* (Stenzel 2008, 101, who made the identification available to me).

18 *bsgrub pa med cing gnas pa med// 'du byed med pa mkha' 'dra bas//* (Karmay 1988, 80–82, translation of the *Lta ba rgum chung*, or *mTha' i mun sel sgron ma, bsTan 'gyur*, Peking Edition, No. 5920).

19 Collected Works of Gampopa, *Tshogs chos legs mdzes ma*, 27v: *rang gi sems la ltos dang / bltas na sems la dngos po dang mtshan ma gang du yang grub pa med de/ nam mkha' lta bu yin no// de ltar do ha las kyang / sems ni nam mkha' lta bu bzung bya ste// gdod nas dag pa nam mkha'i rang bzhin la// bltas shing bltas shing mthong ba 'gag pa 'gyur// zhes gsungs so/*. See also Saraha, *Dohakoṣagīti* (*Do ha mdzod kyi glu*), vol. 51, 72r–v.

> If you look at the mind, nothing at all and no characteristics exist within it. It is like space. Thus it says in the *dohās*: "Apprehend the mind as being like space. Looking again and again at that which is from the beginning pure, the nature of space, seeing ceases." [37]

Gampopa's disciple Phagmodrupa (1110–1170) added a positive twist (in the last line): [38]

> If you do not let go or not let go, summon or not summon, [39]
> focus on an object, or set up a support,
> and if you, not practicing anything, rest in that innate state,
> you will experience that which has no boundaries nor center, like space.[20]

In mahāmudrā texts of the Kagyüpas, the spatial metaphor of the mind is, therefore, most often used to illustrate the cessation of cognitive activity ("seeing") through exhaustion since there is nothing to focus on in endless space. However, although this is basically an apophatic approach, Phagmodrupa has managed to introduce a positive twist. He argues that even in the space of the mind where there is nothing that one could let go or not let go, invoke or not, or focus on, there is an experience to be had, namely that of space (although that experience will remain ineffable). The religious meaning created through the metaphor of space is that although the mind cannot be cognized ("grasped"), the realization of that fact is not only possible but also accompanied by a distinct experience of something like an *unimpeded expansion*. [40]

Tilopa's *Gangama* is also in this tradition of using the metaphor of space to introduce the nature of the mind. In his introduction to the nature of the mind right in the beginning through lines 5–29, in what the Karmapa describes as the "view" section,[21] Tilopa relies heavily on the central metaphor of space. According to the Karmapa's *Outline*, Tilopa teaches the "view" mainly through the example of space:[22] [41]

> 2.2.1. View [42]
> 2.2.1.1. Through the example of space it is shown that [the mind] is without support
> 2.2.1.1.1. Through the example of space it is shown that [the mind] is not defiled by veils
> 2.2.1.1.2. Through the example of a cloud it is shown that [the mind] is not defiled by veils
> 2.2.1.1.3. Through the example of space it is shown that [the mind] is not

20 Collected Works of Phagmodrupa, *dGe ba'i bshes gnyen chos kyi blo gros la bskur ba'i gdams ngag* (4:654–661): *btang yang mi btang dgug kyang mi dgug ste// dmigs yul med par rten yang mi bca' bar// bsgom du med pa gnyug ma'i ngang bzhag na/ /mtha' dbus med pa nam mkha' lta bur myong//* (657).

21 As I will show later, "view" is in this context not a philosophical view, but insight into the true nature of mind and reality.

22 Karmapa, 160: *lta ba/ nam mkha'i dpes brten med par bstan pa/ nam mkha'i dpes sgrib pas ma gos par bstan pa/ sprin pa'i dpes sgrib pas ma gos par bstan pa/ nam mkha'i dpes sgrib pas ma gos par bstan pa/ nyi ma'i dpes sgrib pas ma gos par bstan pa/ nam mkha'i dpes brjod pa las 'das par bstan pa/*. I have written out the shorthand used in the Karmapa's *outline* here in full.

defiled by veils[23]
2.2.1.1.4. Through the example of the sun it is shown that [the mind] is not defiled by veils
2.2.1.2. Through the example of space it is shown that [the mind] cannot be expressed

Two of the examples employed here—cloud and sun—are certainly not by accident also metaphors in the realm of (celestial) space, and thus, as I will argue, visibility. That the sun is used here as an example of visibility rather than luminosity will be discussed below. [43]

The Karmapa starts his discussions in the context of lines 5–7, saying that "space" is such that its essence is empty, its nature is clear, its definition is that it is without obstruction, and it permeates all spheres. On this occasion, we can show that the Tibetan term *gsal ba*, in the way it is used here to describe the nature of space, has nothing to do with luminosity or light (as it is often translated) but signifies clarity. As the first two adjectives used by the Karmapa to characterize space—empty, without obstruction—show, the point is that space is clear, as in "clear sky" or "a clear day." Therefore, the mind's nature is such that when you look at it, there is no veil, blockage, or obstruction. Saraha is quoted here as saying:[24] [44]

A What is called mahāmudrā [45]
B is like looking at the nature of space.
C [This looking] is that unfabricated, innate state
D in that it is a practice, yet not the practice of external [objects],
E and roving, yet not being distracted internally.

Lines a–d are easy to understand: In mahāmudrā practice, there is no external focus, like visualizations, and in such a meditation practice that is without grasping anything or fixation on anything, the mind is released. The last line (e) is complicated. Together with the previous line (d) it plays on the "(over) there and (over) here" contrast (*phar tshur*), translated here as "external" and "internal," a sub-category of the metaphor of space. Line (d) is about abandoning external (lit. "thither," *phar*) objects focused on during other meditative practices. The last line (e) refers to the inner perspective (lit. "hither," *tshur*). "Roving" alludes to the release of the mind, which is a movement in so far as the mind is here understood to permeate space. But that is not a movement where the mind gets "internally distracted" (*tshur la mi yengs*) by hanging on to thoughts, which would be a fault in meditative practice. The metaphor "space" is here used in the specific way of "providing room for movement." The movement is represented by the Tibetan term *yengs pa*, which translates both as "roving" and "being distracted." The instruction plays [46]

23 2.2.1.1.1. and 2.2.1.1.3. have the same description, i.e., it is shown through the example of space that the mind is not defiled. The first works with the paradoxical instruction of "looking at the center of space" and the second discusses the absence of color and form, etc., in space.

24 Karmapa, 163: *phyag rgya chen po skad pa de// nam mkha'i rang bzhin lta ba 'dra// bsgom yang phar la mi bsgom zhing // yengs kyang tshur la mi yengs par// ma bcos gnyug ma'i ngang nyid do//*. I have not been able to identify the quote in writings ascribed to Saraha.

with this term in that "yet not being distracted" excludes hanging on to thoughts but includes the release of the mind when it is understood to be permeating space.

To sum it up so far, the mind is like space in that in both, there is no support, no object to rest on, and both are clear of everything. Thus, there is no obstruction in the mind. Like space, the mind permeates everything. That is, if one wants to see the mind, there is nothing to fix one's attention to, yet the mind is everywhere, like space. The metaphor "space" goes hand-in-hand with the metaphors "to permeate" (= movement) and "clarity" (= unobstructed view). Resting in it in a relaxed way, as one is instructed in line 7, one's awareness permeates everywhere unobstructedly, not getting drawn to anything. [47]

The Metaphors *Space*, *Fetter*, and *Becoming Free* (lines 8–11)

The following four lines in Tilopa's instruction (8–11) drive home his essential instruction of line 7: "Relax in the unfabricated innate state and rest [in that]!" Resting in that innate state, which is like space, is like "loosening the fetter" (l. 8), where the metaphor "fetter" refers to thoughts.[25] Note the correlation of "relax" (l. 7) and "loosen" (l. 8). To "relax" in an unfabricated state thus means to interrupt the stream of thought. Thoughts are a distraction, making it impossible to look with the mind at the mind or to have a clear awareness of one's mind. Since "looking with the mind at the mind" (l. 10) is a means for liberation, distracting thoughts are a restraint in preventing one from becoming free. Without loosening the restraining fetter of thoughts, the mind cannot be perceived as what it is: space-like. But once the mind is perceived to be like space, there is nothing to be seen since open space provides nothing to look at. Seeing is exhausted, thoughts come to permanent rest, one "becomes free," and "supreme awakening is obtained." [48]

Line 9 says: "Having looked at the center of space, seeing ceases." We have already seen this idea above in the statements of Saraha and Gampopa. I have called this a paradox ("center") in a metaphor ("space"):[26] Since space is boundless and something boundless cannot have a center, it is impossible to "look at the center of space." Understanding that there is nothing to be seen, "seeing ceases." The method of realizing the mind is, therefore, one of exhaustion. Together with another essential and widespread metaphor of the nature of mind—emptiness—space is, therefore, most often used in apophatic or negating approaches to the nature of mind. In its context, we also find negations like nonpractice (*sgom du med pa*), stopping of mental activities (*yid la mi byed pa*), and cessation of thoughts (*rnam rtog 'gag pa*).[27] [49]

Note that thoughts (*rnam rtog*) have a negative connotation in that they are the thing to be abandoned here: If one wants to become free, one must loosen or break the fetter. We will later see that within the context of *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā, thoughts can also have a positive value and are even seen as indispensable for attaining awakening. The [50]

25 "Fetter" is a metaphor for everything that binds to rebirth in samsara, like duality, affliction, or grasping a self. In a more general sense, it is, therefore a metaphor for samsara—the chain of rebirths—itself.

26 See above, paragraph 36.

27 The Tibetan term *rnam rtog* (Skt. *vikalpa*) is in more technical contexts usually translated as something like "conceptions." Here, however, it refers more basically to thoughts as such. In the context of *sahajayoga* teachings, it probably even includes mere mental impulses.

metaphor "fetter" works only in the apophatic approach to mahāmudrā, where thoughts must be stopped.

The Metaphors *Wave* and *Cloud* (lines 12–15)

Lines 12–15 continue to teach that the "waves of thoughts" will "dissipate by seeing your mind." The metaphors "wave" and "fetter" are similar in that both have an element of continuity, namely the successive waves and the continuity of the fetter (perhaps even the links if we think of a chain [of thoughts]). They are also similar in that, in a negative sense, the fetter binds, and the waves "overpower" and knock you down. However, the wave metaphor provides another particularly emphasized element: The waves emerge from the ocean and disappear into it again. They emerge as disturbances on the ocean's surface and disappear back into the stillness of the ocean. This feature illustrates how thoughts and the mind are like waves and the ocean. [51]

Tilopa says that thoughts disappear when one observes the mind. To achieve that, one watches the mind and perceives that thoughts—like waves from the ocean—emerge from the empty space of the mind. Once they have emerged, they stay nowhere and disappear to nowhere. That is similar to a cloud of ground mist that arises from space and dissolves back into space. Watching the mind and understanding these analogies, thoughts are pacified. [52]

"Therefore," says the Karmapa, "understand in the same way that the swarms of thoughts, too, that arise from your mind arise simultaneously (*dus mnyam du*) with mahāmudrā!"[28] That is an essential instruction in the context of "no mental activity" (Skt. *amanasikara*). In the previous lines 8–11, the non-existing "center of space" was a paradox within the space metaphor. By searching for something of which we have a general abstract understanding—the "center of space"—we exhaust the mind since that thing does not exist. "Having looked with the mind at the mind" (l. 10), one finally rests in just that empty mind. [53]

Lines 12–15 now offer a different version of the same essential instruction. One watches the mind, looking out for emerging thoughts. If a thought arises, one tries to see the source from which it originated. It seems to come from the mind, but there is nothing in the mind from which it could have originated. Similarly, we can also not find a place in the mind where the thought rests when it has arisen because once arisen, the thought has no persistence anywhere. In fact, when we look for it, it is already gone, and again we can find no place in the mind where the thought has disappeared to. The result is the same as in looking for the center of space—the mind gets exhausted, and all thoughts disappear. The metaphor of "space" for the mind is again used here, together with "movement," in a highly skillful way as a meditative practice that produces religious experience and meaning.[29] The thoughts that seemingly move through the mind—"seemingly," because [54]

28 My rendering "swarms" for Tib. *tshogs* is a rather free translation. Literally, *tshogs* is an assemblage.

29 Here it must be emphasized that the metaphors of the literary genre of the "instructions" do not directly produce a religious sense, but first of all an experience, which then produces the sense. This sense, in turn, can be expressed only through the metaphor. This fact deserves attention, but there is not enough space for further discussion in this paper.

there is no beginning, middle, or end to this movement—disappear, and the mind is experienced as being like space. The religious meaning (mind=space) that arises here with all its connotations deserves further research. Suffice it to say that the mind is not experienced as light in the present context. Instead, the nature of the mind seems to be seen as entirely free from veils and obstructions (such as thoughts and afflictions). "Space" as a metaphor in Tibetan Buddhism is, quite different from "light," negatively constructed ("empty space without obstructions and contact").[30]

"Waves" (*rba rlabs*) is a powerful metaphor for thoughts. Several of its aspects will be [55] discussed later, such as that waves occur when the wind moves the ocean, which is to say that through stimulation of the senses, thoughts appear one at the heel of the other like waves on the ocean. Another aspect discussed later is that the waves are nothing but water, which shows that thoughts are only the mind.

The Karmapa's use of the term *rig pa* ("awareness") in this context to describe the fruit [56] of this practice is noteworthy. He glosses *rig pa* as "self-aware gnosis" (*rang rig pa'i ye shes*), "nature of the mind" (*sems nyid*), and "mahāmudrā." This self-aware gnosis is an awareness of thoughts as "arising from your mind," which is to say that they are *unborn* since, in the mind, thoughts cannot be seen to arise from, remain in, or disappear to any place. The awareness (*rig pa*) of that is mahāmudrā. That is, mahāmudrā is understood here as the awareness of thoughts that arise and are simultaneously "unborn." This "birthlessness," or, more abstractly, "non-arising," is the "true nature" (Skt. *dharmatā* and *tathatā*), or, literally, "dharma-ness" and "suchness," of the sūtras and the "great seal" (Skt. *mahāmudrā*) of the mantra vehicle.[31] Whether it is "true nature," "birthlessness," or "great seal," for the Kagyüpas, its realization is tantamount to awakening. Thus, the great yogi Milarepa is often quoted as saying: "Knowing one thing, I am a master of all; knowing all, I understand it as one."[32]

Such a "great seal" (Skt. *mahāmudrā*) can only be realized when there are thoughts, but [57] immediately upon becoming aware of them, thoughts lose their power and disappear. When one has not realized mahāmudrā, thoughts still are powerful illusions and, as a consequence, one "roams in saṃsāra."[33] It is important to note that thoughts are here still chiefly negatively connotated: They cause one to roam helplessly in saṃsāra, and when—by the power of seeing the nature of the mind—they disappear, mahāmudrā is obtained. When the Karmapa states that thoughts that arise from the mind arise simultaneous with mahāmudrā, this is limited to the fact that with that realization of the void nature of thoughts, mahāmudrā is actualized. Thoughts are thus still negatively connotated: They are to be abandoned and disappear. In other words, up to this point in his commentary, the Karmapa does not seem to refer directly to an explicit way of using thoughts directly to realize the mind as *dharmakāya*. Later in his commentary,

30 Yisūn, entry for *nam mkha'*: *thogs reg med pa'i bar snang stong pa*.
31 The Tibetan tradition does never speak of "tantra" as a vehicle (Skt. *yāna*). Instead, the term "tantra" (*rgyud*) refers to the text. When speaking of the vehicle, Tibetans use *mantrayāna* (*[gsang] sngags kyi theg pa*).
32 Tsangnyon 1971, 204: *nga gcig shes kun la mkhas pa yin// kun shes gcig tu go ba yin//*.
33 In other words, one is still bound by the chain of rebirths.

however, the Karmapa will introduce a manner of working with thoughts as we find it in *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā, which will be discussed below.

First Excursion: The Problem of View *vs.* Conduct (lines 16–19)

Lines 16–19 describe the mind as something that cannot be stained in any way. If you see [58]
the nature of your mind, the Karmapa explains, "neither virtue nor evil have inflicted harm or caused benefit [to it], are doing that, or will do that." If we read this strictly within its immediate context, i.e., as an instruction on meditative practice, it states that all thoughts about virtue and evil are abandoned *while training the state of mahāmudrā*. However, is this also an instruction on conduct? Is this granting a free ride in the field of ethics? In line 88, still in the immideate context of meditative practice, Tilopa says that "[dwelling] without rejecting or accepting, all that exists becomes released in [mahā]mudrā."[34] The Karmapa comments on line 94, but now in the context of conduct: "Freedom from boundaries and [remaining] without [either] stopping [or] accomplishing [anything] is the king of the conduct." Such statements have sometimes been interpreted as a call to leave ethical norms behind. However, one can easily contrast them with statements to the contrary. Milarepa, for example, stated (de Jong 1959, 153–54):

> Having great confidence in emptiness and understanding that emptiness [59]
> itself arises as cause and result, one will automatically engage in efforts to eliminate and accomplish cause and result, establish virtue, and abandon evil. Since this great confidence in cause and result is the root of all Dharmas, it is essential to be meticulous and make efforts toward the meditative practice of abandoning evil and accomplishing virtue.

Milarepa's disciple Gampopa said:[35] [60]

> The Jowo Kadampa lamas said: "Having realized emptiness, one will proceed [61]
> very attentively concerning karma, cause, and result." That is very right!

The key point in both quotes by great masters in the Karmapa's tradition is always [62]
the same: The view of emptiness or mahāmudrā does not mean that one can neglect the teachings on karma, cause, and result. Milarepa's line that "emptiness itself arises as cause and result" refers to the fact that wherever there is emptiness, there is cause and result (and thus karma) since both are the two sides of the same coin.[36] This topic has been discussed in detail by Jigten Sumgön and his commentators in the context of vajra statement 6.17 (Sobisch 2020b, 609–618): "If one has realized emptiness, emptiness

34 The idea of "not rejecting, not accepting" may go back to *Ratnagotravibhāga* 1.154ab.

35 Quoted according to the commentaries of Jigten Sumgön's *Single Intention* (*dGongs gcig*) (see Sobisch 2020b, 613). Similar words can be found in Collected Works of Gampopa, *Phyag rgya chen po gsal byed kyi man ngag*, 6r, and *Rje dwags pa lha rje'i gsung zhal gyi bdud rtsi thun mong ma yin pa*, 4v.

36 Van Schaik (2004, 73), describes a similar view in Dzogchen: "Great Perfection texts tend to speak of rejecting the distinction between good and bad in the sphere of one's own mind, rather than encouraging unrestricted behavior. In other words, they deal with the issue of moral relativity in the realm of thoughts and emotions (*rnam rtog*) rather than activities. The identification of thoughts as either good or bad is seen as a barrier to the process of meditation (…)." See also the footnote below.

emerges as cause and result."[37] Jigten Sumgön, who succeeded Gampopa's disciple Phagmodrupa, interpreted "free from accepting and rejecting" as being free from aversion to what one dislikes (such as the restrictions of disciplined conduct) and being free from attachment to what one likes (such as easy-going conduct: Sobisch 2020b, 588–593).

The Karmapa's statement that to be "without stopping or accomplishing is the king of the conduct" is too brief to conclude his view on the matter. However, it is an ideal in mahāmudrā and dzogchen to extend the meditative state where nothing is blocked and nothing is accomplished to everyday conduct as much as possible. Usually, that is expressed by stating the transcendence of every action like walking, standing, lying, or sitting, as it was first described in the *Mahāvastu* for the Buddha (Powers 2009, 54). However, an "anything goes" in ethical matters would be an extreme interpretation. When the idea of transcendence of everyday activities is applied to the Buddha's followers, that has in mind first and foremost the maintaining of awareness not only during formal meditative practice but also in all areas of life. [63]

The Clarity (*gsal ba*) Metaphor (lines 20–23)

The first mention of clarity as a metaphor was in the Karmapa's comments on lines 5–7. Clarity was mentioned as a quality of the space-like mind: to be without obstruction and pervading all spheres. In lines (20–23) of the *Gangama*, Tilopa uses clarity in a comparison between the "clear light essence of the mind" and "the essence of the clear, bright sun." In both cases, the "clear light" or "clear luminosity" cannot be veiled even by the thickest darkness. [64]

The somewhat bumpy simile here says that the darkness of thousands of eons cannot veil the sun (although the mere presence of a sun should not allow total darkness to exist in the first place). However, the analogy then clarifies what is meant: The "*clear* light that is the essence of one's mind," which is invisible as long as one has not discovered it, cannot be destroyed or harmed—not even veiled—by birth in saṃsāra. That is to say that it is always there, it only has to be discovered, and all darkness (= invisibility of the nature of the mind) is gone in the instant of discovering it, and the mind has become clear and visible. So this is definitely not about a light being emitted and illuminating something else. Instead, it is about "visibility," in particular, of the nature of the mind.[38] [65]

Let us dwell for a moment on the term "clear/bright" (*dwang[s]*)[39] as used in the [66]

37 Similarly, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche comments on Zurchungpa's Advice (84): "A practitioner who has truly realized the empty nature of everything naturally has a much clearer understanding of interdependence and is convinced that actions inevitably produce effects. Saying one has realized the view without having understood the law of cause and effect is a lie … This is why Shechen Gyaltsap notes, 'You have to master the essential point that emptiness manifests as cause and effect.' The more complete one's realization of emptiness becomes, the more clearly one sees the infallible relationship of cause and effect in relative truth." This is the same point as it was made by Milarepa, Gampopa, and Jigten Sumgön.

38 In his comments on lines 64–66, the Karmapa says "the nature of mind that is without mental fixation, which is clarity." In other words, the visibility of the nature of the mind is veiled when one fixes the mind on anything in the space-like mind. Such a fixation is an obstruction.

Gangama. If it were not referring to the visibility of something but to the emanation of light from a light source (like the sun), it would follow that the Tilopa would speak of the mind as a source of light. One would have to ask what exactly emits light in the mind and what it is meant to illuminate. Such a concept of luminosity would quickly lead to several undesirable consequences.

Already the early sūtras describe the mind as being radiant or luminous but defiled [67]
by adventitious (Skt. *āgantuka*) defilements (*Aṅguttara Nikāya* i 10). As Anālayo (2017, 27–41) argues, the radiant or luminous condition is understood as being comparable to that of refined gold.[40] The latter loses its luminosity when extraneous elements like iron, copper, tin, lead, and silver defile it. That is to say that something inherent to the mind is lost when it is defiled by afflictions. What is that inherent quality? Is it, literally, that it shines like a light? That would come dangerously close to ascribing substantiality to the mind. "Light" would, in this case, also not be a metaphor. Or is, as in the case of gold, the luminosity of the mind a metaphor for the visibility of an essential quality of the mind, which is only visible when it is not defiled? In the latter case, what is that essential quality? According to the introduction to the nature of the mind in the *Gangama* in lines 5–29, the primary nature of the mind is that it is like space. Space's qualities are invisible when it is veiled like the sky is veiled by clouds. The spaciousness is then as invisible as the radiance of gold when other substances defile it. In the *Gangama*, at least, the mind's light does not seem to be a literal quality of the mind, namely that it somehow shines with light. Instead, "clear light" seems to be a metaphor for the visibility of the nature of the mind, such as when one speaks of a "clear sky" whose depth becomes visible when no clouds obscure it.

In his commentary on this passage, the Karmapa uses terminology that clearly has [68]
in mind the visibility and clarity of the mind. Accordingly, what is at issue here is the removal of veils that causes visibility of the mind's spatial nature. The Karmapa explains: "Overcome by a single moment of clear sunlight (*nyi ma'i 'od gsal*), darkness will clear up." To further describe the "clearing up" (*gsal bar gyur*) effect of sunlight, the Karmapa uses the synonym (and homonym) "being cleared out" (*sel bar 'gyur*), and for the result, the terms "purified" (*byang*) and "having become pure" (*dag par 'gyur*). Thus, at least

39 Tib. *dwang[s]* is a difficult term. Actually, it could be translated as "transparent," especially when it appears together with "clear" (*gsal*), as e.g. in the following sentence: "When the water is transparent, the fish are visible" (*chu dwangs na nya mo gsal*). But this can hardly be about the transparency of the sun! Therefore another meaning which can be connected with *dwang[s]* must be assumed here, namely "bright," as in "the bright clear sun lights up the sky" (*nyi ma dwangs gsal nam mkha' dwangs*), or "outshone by the bright moonlight of the sommer" (*dbyar dus zla 'od dwangs pas zil gyis mnan*).

40 Anālayo refers to SN 46.33 at SN V 92,22 and AN 5.23 at AN III 16,18. He argues further that the radiance is achieved through meditative cultivation and not something inherent to the mind. In fact, he states that the mind is rather naturally defiled (2017, 30). Here I cannot follow his argument in all respects. He says that according to the *Upakkilesa-sutta* (MN 128 at MN III 158,4), the perceived light is lost due to defilement and that, therefore, the light cannot be intrinsic to the mind (2017, 31). However, the *sutta* passage can also be understood to mean that the light disappears when the mind is defiled, but not in the sense that it is a light that goes out, but in the sense that it is obscured by that defilement and thus becomes invisible. It can then still exist, albeit not visible to the meditative practitioner. Anālayo's interpretation also contradicts the fact that the *Aṅguttara* mentions the defilements to be adventitious (*āgantuka*) and that, therefore, the luminosity existed before the defilement. This is also how the luminosity of the mind is treated in the Mahāyāna.

here, the Tibetan term *gsal ba* is a metaphor indicating clarity in the sense of visibility, freed from any veils, but not radiance in the literal sense.

Furthermore, the Karmapa emphasizes here that it is not only so that the removal of defilements makes the essence of the mind visible. He also says that when through meditative practice, that essence is seen, that has the effect of clearing away all the veils accumulated in the past at once.[41] In the *Upakkilesa-sutta* of early Buddhism, diligent meditative concentration causes one to see the radiance, but only for as long as no new defilements occur (Anālayo 2017, 31). The Karmapa, however, seems to say that seeing the mind's essence has a permanent effect, as all previous defilements are purged. Although he does not explicitly say so, this apparently indicates a permanent breakthrough to awakening. Again, this statement indicates that the methods taught in the first part of the Gangama are methods of instantaneous, or at least very rapid, awakening intended for students of the highest capacity. [69]

Second Excursion: Ineffability and the Power of the Metaphor (lines 24–29)

Lines 24–27 address a point that is probably crucial in all mystical and esoteric traditions, namely that the absolute (or transcendent) is considered ineffable. Nevertheless, that fact has never prevented anyone from trying (although perhaps those who have not tried might have left no traces). Tilopa solves the problem elegantly by talking about those who try, explaining why they cannot succeed: They can try to apply the term "clear light" to the mind, but they cannot find a basis within the mind for that imputation. [70]

Again, we see how well the metaphor "space" works. Since space (or the mind) is thought of as something without boundary and a center, and since space (mind) is recognized as being that when all veils are removed, there is nothing to which one can attach a conceptual attribution. This is true even for the term "empty (of independent existence)," which also cannot be referred to anything because nothing can be found in space that could be empty in that way. Likewise, the term "clear light" cannot be referred to anything in a literal sense within the space-like mind. Moreover, there is nothing there that shines. The "clarity" can refer only to the fact that nothing veils the space-like mind. [71]

The concluding lines of the introduction to the nature of the mind emphasize once again that the metaphor of space in the *Gangama* is the most important: [72]

> 28 Accordingly, the nature of the mind is primordially like space. [73]
> 29 There are no dharmas that are not included in it.

That concludes the section on the view and the introduction to the nature of the mind. The introduction to the mind is done exclusively by analogies and with the help of powerful metaphors. The inescapable conclusion is that no linguistic expression can *directly* denote the transcendent and absolute nature. Nevertheless, metaphors are powerful tools in any language. For the Indian language of Sanskrit in particular, [74]

41 See also Tilopa's statement of line 15: The waves of thoughts dissipate by seeing one's mind.

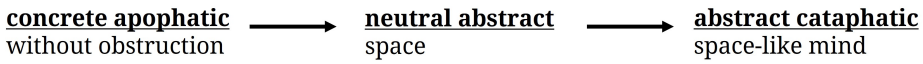


Figure 2 Levels of Abstraction.

Tzohar has shown in his book *A Yogācāra Buddhist Theory of Metaphor* that Buddhists, especially yogācārins and, as I would argue, mahāmudrā masters too, have seen *all language* as metaphorical. They were ready and eager to use the power of metaphor to push open the gate through which one must pass to reach transcendence.

Metaphors work because they indirectly produce new meanings even when they do [75] not denote something directly. Often, metaphors connect a linguistic domain of everyday expressions as the source domain with another domain, the target domain, to which the source is not usually connected. To call God one's "shepherd" is such a mapping of the source domain, "shepherd," to the target domain, "God." There is no usual connection between the two, but there is enough similarity to use "shepherd" as a metaphor. For example, both are guiding and protecting other beings. God *is not* literally a shepherd, but metaphorically, he *is*. In other words, the metaphor comprises both the literal "is not" and the metaphorical "is" (Ricœur 1978, 6). From the non-religious everyday domain of "shepherd," a new, religious meaning for god has been created.

The space metaphor is similar, although other features must be considered. The main [76] difference to the shepherd metaphor is that the source domain "space" is not used here in its everyday meaning. Instead, the space concept used here is already an abstract meaning. In Buddhist thought, "space" does not denote, as in everyday language, the inside of a bounded area. It is defined as "open space, without obstruction, intangible (in the sense of "non-objective")."[42] In other words, the abstract "space" has been developed from the concrete apophatic meaning "having no obstruction." In other words, we have here a development from "concrete apophatic" to "neutral abstract." This abstract and neutral "space" is not yet endowed with positive features. However, when it is connected to the mind when Tilopa describes the mind as "space-like," it acquires the positive, cataphatic qualities of "complete openness," "spaciousness," and "including all phenomena." In other words, we now have the development as visualized in fig. 2.

On the abstract cataphatic level, both "space-like" and "mind" are absolute metaphors; [77] they lack a real reference to metaphors in the material world. Such absolute metaphors stand at the end of a development. Once they have reached that point, they seem to "resist being converted back into authenticity and logicality" (Blumenberg [1960] 2010, 7), perhaps another reason why "space" is such a powerful metaphor.

Third Excursion (Part A): *Amanasikara* and *Sahaja* Mahāmudrā—"No-Thought" *vs.* "Light of the *Dharmakāya*"

This essay aims to show how different ways of teaching mahāmudrā favor different [78] metaphors. To show this, perhaps it is time for a brief detour into the history of mahā-

42 In Tibetan: *thogs reg med pa'i bar snang stong pa*. See, Yisūn 1985, entry: *nam mkha'*.

mudrā teachings in Tibet and India to see in which of these traditions our authors stand. Generally speaking, Tilopa stands in the tradition of *amanasikara* in the *Gangama*, where words, thoughts, and concepts are seen as illusory and thus have negative connotations. Tilopa expresses these negative connotations throughout his text in several places when he says that

- when the swarms of thoughts cease, awakening is obtained (line 11) [79]
- by seeing the mind, the waves of thoughts disappear (15)
- the mind is beyond the domain of thoughts (34)
- guarded vows and commitments [of the sphere] of thought are a degeneration from the true state (43)
- one must let the thoughts, which are like a stream of stains, clear up (86)

The Karmapa, too, expresses a negative connotation when he says, for example, that [80] the thoughts will wither away (commentary on line 77). However, his overall approach to thoughts is balanced, and this seems to show an influence of the *sahajayoga* mahā-mudrā that came to prominence in the Kagyü tradition through Gampopa, and which the Karmapa has apparently combined in his commentary with Tilopa's *amanasikara* mahāmudrā. Gampopa himself is said to have received the *sahaja* tradition from two sources independently, namely from Milarepa and from the Kadamapa master Chagriwa in the tradition of Atiśa (Schiller 2014, 231–233). However, the roots of both traditions still need to be clarified, and there may well be other sources for this particular influence. Padmakarpo (1527–1592) claims in his document of transmission (*gsan yig*) that both Milarepa's and Atiśa's transmission go back to the Indian mahāsiddha Kambala,[43] who bestowed it on Rakṣita and Atiśa. The first passed it on to Marpa, from whom it is said to have gone to Mila and Gampopa. Atiśa's is said to have passed through Gönpawa and Chagriwa and then reached Gampopa (Schiller 2014, 246n39, see figure fig. 3).[44]

The transmission is known as the instruction of the *Two Armors* (*go cha gnyis*), namely [81] the outer armor of the view (*phyi lta ba'i go cha*) and the inner armor of discriminating knowledge (*nang shes rab kyi go cha*). Phagmodrupa describes the main feature of this instruction as "taking thoughts as the path" (*rnam rtog lam du byed pa*: Schiller 2014, 247n44).[45] He refers here to a teaching of Milarepa, whom he quotes as having said (Schiller 2014, 247n44):[46]

> We all take thoughts as the path. [82]
> Others hold that thoughts are abandoned.

In Atiśa's *Mahāmudrā Granted to Gönpa*, the crucial lines right at the beginning read:[47] [83]

43 In the Tibetan tradition, Kambala is an *alias* of Lavapa. He is also variously identified with Lalitavajra and one of the Indrabhūtis (see Torricelli 1993, 1–4, 185–198, 186n5).

44 However, I found no trace of terms like *go cha gnyis*, *[phyi] lta ba'i go cha*, *[nang] shes rab kyi go cha*, or *chos sku'i 'od* (for which see below) in works before Gampopa's time.

45 Collected Works of Phagmodrupa, *lHan cig skyes sbyor gyi skor*, vol. 2, fol. 59r.

46 Collected Works of Phagmodrupa, vol. 2, fol. 53r: *nged kun mam rtog lam du khyer // gzhan dag rtog pa spong bar 'dod//*. Also quoted in *'Brug pa'i chos mdzod chen po bsam 'phel nor bu'i bang mdzod*, bdr:MW3CN2232, vol. 53, 339; Karma pa Mi bkyod rdo rje, *sKu gsum ngo sprod kyi rnam par bshad pa mdo rgyud bstan pa mtha' dag gi e wam phyag rgya*, bdr:IE23660, vol. 1, 326.

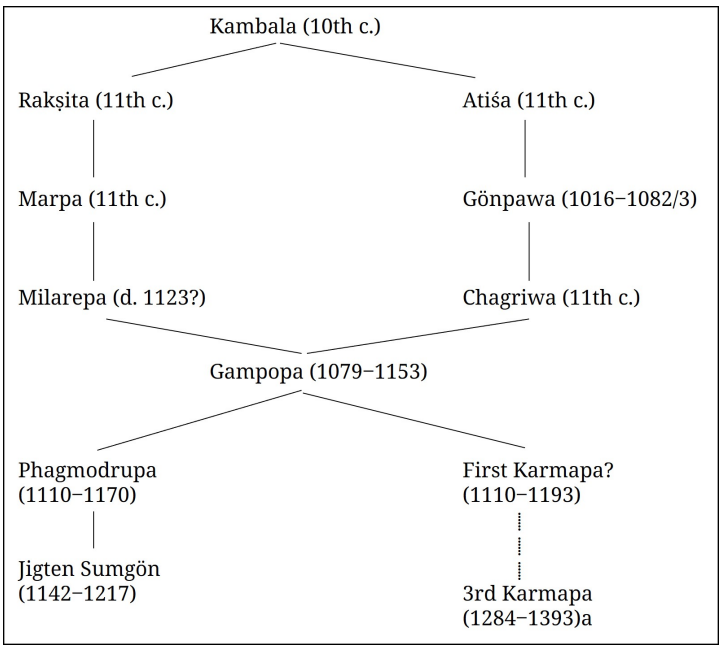


Figure 3 Sahajayoga transmission according to Padmakarpo.

> The inborn nature (Skt. *sahaja*) of the mind is the *dharmakāya*, and the inborn nature of appearances is the light of the *dharmakāya*. Both exist like the sun and the sun rays and like sandelwood and the scent of sandelwood.[48] [84]

In the general understanding of the Kagyüpas' mahāmudrā tradition, appearances are one's mind, a view that, while shared to some extent with all other schools, is emphasized here because it is particularly suited to this type of meditative practice. Atiśa certainly accepted this doctrine but in the modified version of the Mādhyamikas. For a Kagyü practitioner of mahāmudrā, although appearances and thoughts appear differently, namely outside and inside, they are the same thing in that they both arise together with the mind. In *sahaja* terms, appearances and thoughts are the "light of the *dharmakāya*." This sameness of appearances and thoughts is also visible when Gampopa teaches the very same words as found in Atiśa's text above to the first Karmapa, but with a crucial additional line (here underlined): [85]

> The inborn nature of the mind is the *dharmakāya*. The inborn nature of appearance is the light of the *dharmakāya*. The inborn nature of the mind is its nature or essence. The inborn appearance is the thought that has arisen from [the mind].[49] Both exist like the sun and the sun rays and like sandalwood and the scent of sandalwood. [86]

47 *Jo bo rjes dgon pa la gnang ba' i phyag chen*, also known as *lHan cig skyes sbyor gyi gdam ngag mdor bsdus snying po*: *de yang sems nyid lhan cig skyes pa chos kyi sku dang / snang ba lhan cig skyes pa chos kyi sku'i 'od gnyis po de/ nyi ma dang / nyi ma'i 'od zer ram / tsanda dang / tsanda gyi dri bzhin du gnas pa yin gsungs/* (see Schiller 2014, 719).

48 One can hardly overlook here the similarity to the comparison of the mind and its luminousness with gold and the radiance of gold discussed further above.

49 Collected Works of Gampopa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*, 50r: *snang ba lhan cig skyes pa ni/ de las byung ba'i rnam par rtog pa de yin/*; also contained in his *mDo sngags kyi sgom don bsdus pa*, 8v.

Therefore, as its perhaps most vital point, *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā emphasizes that the mind—the *dharmakāya*—and appearances/thoughts—the light of the *dharmakāya*—occur simultaneously. In the Kagyü tradition, the practicing of the mind is done both ways: One looks directly at the clear essence of the mind, completely free from thoughts, and getting accustomed to that, one obtains supreme awakening, which is in accordance with such *amanasikara* mahāmudrā teachings as we find them in Tilopa's *Gangama*.[50] Unique to *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā, however, is that the realization of the *dharmakāya* is achieved by watching appearances and thoughts (see fig. 4). [87]

At this point, we must briefly refer to another influential mahāmudrā teaching connected to Gampopa and the *sahājayoga*, namely the four yogas of mahāmudrā. These four are known as (1) "single-pointedness" (*rtse gcig*), (2) "freedom from proliferation" (*spros bral*), (3) "single taste" (*ro gcig*), and (4) "without practicing" (*sgom du med*).[51] While the first yoga of single-pointed concentration leads up to the threshold of the first bodhisattva level, the fourth yoga equals the stage of Buddhahood (for the correspondences to the bodhisattva paths, see the table below).[52] The teaching that all appearances are one's mind is, according to Phagmodrupa's instructions to Geshe Nyang, attained on the level of the third yoga, the single taste, which equals the eighth to tenth level on the fourth path of the bodhisattvas (see fig. 5). [88]

Thus, having first practiced single-pointedness, one attains and gets accustomed to the second yoga of freedom from proliferation until one realizes all phenomena as mind with the third yoga.[53] Here, and also in Jigten Sumgön's commentary on that work, "phenomena" are yet not further differentiated.[54] In a further work on *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā, however, the *Introduction of the Mahāmudrā "Yoga of the Inborn,"*[55] Jigten Sumgön presents a differentiation between "introduction of thoughts as *dharmakāya*" and "introduction of appearances as *dharmakāya*." Accordingly, first, as in the *Gangama*, having relaxed the mind into its natural state, one looks "nakedly" at the nature of the mind that is clear (*gsal*) and without thoughts (*rtog pa med pa*). Then one looks within this state (still as a part of introducing thoughts as *dharmakāya*) at the nature of a "stirring" or "moving" (*'gyus pa*) thought. One has to ask oneself: Is there any difference between the abiding mind and a mind where a thought is moving? Doing this repeatedly and for a long time, one realizes the unobstructed arising of the thought as that which is "clear" and "empty." [89]

Before we move on to the second step, the introduction of appearances as *dharmakāya*, I would like to briefly discuss the three characteristics of "unobstructed," "clear," and [90]

50 This is expressed several times in the *Gangama*, see lines 10–11, 34–37, and 64–66.
51 For an in-depth study on the four yogas, see Schiller (2014).
52 The complete correlation of the four yogas of mahāmudrā and the ten bodhisattva levels and five paths are laid out in: Collected Works of Jigten Sumgön, *Tshogs chos rnal 'byor bzhi sa lam dang sbyar ba*, vol. 7, 182–193 (cf. Sobisch 2020b, 141, 294).
53 Collected Works of Phagmodrupa, *Phag gru'i rnal 'byor bzhi rim dge bshes myang la springs pa*, vol. 8, p. 616: *yul gyi dngos po ma lus pa// rang gi sems su lhan gyis go /* (cf. Schiller 2014, 373).
54 Schiller (2014, 295), located this work, the *rNal 'byor bzhi'i 'grel pa rnam dag ron ldan*, in the block print collection of sDe dge(?) and Yang ri sgar. His book contains the edited text and a very good German translation. I am not sure if the identification of Jigten Sumgön as the author holds because this would be the only commentary in his entire oeuvre.
55 Collected Works of Jigten Sumgön, vol. 9, 467–497, translated in Sobisch (2006).

***amanasikara* mahāmudrā**	***sahajayoga* mahāmudrā**
looking at the clear essence of the mind remaining without thoughts getting accustomed to that	mind (dharmakāya) and appearances/thoughts (light of the dharmakāya) occur simultaneously
awakening	

Figure 4 Different approaches to thoughts.

four yogas	**bodhisattva levels**	**bodhisattva paths**
without practicing (*bsgom du med*)	eleventh to thirteenth	(5) path of no more learning (Buddhahood)
single taste (*ro gcig*)	eighth to tenth (all appearances are mind)	(4) path of practicing
freedom from proliferation (*spros bral*)	first to seventh	(3) path of seeing
single-pointednes (*rtse gcig*)		(2) path of preparation (1) path of accumulation

Figure 5 Concordance of yogas, levels, and paths.

"empty"—all metaphors. They are here, in Jigten Sumgön's teachings, applied to thought. Previously (**p. 18**), in the Karmapa's comments on lines 5–7 of the *Gangama*, the same three were connected to "space," the key metaphor for the mind. The point made in the *sahajayoga* is that the moving thought and the spacious thought-free mind are not different. This is illustrated by the metaphorical simile "like waves that move through water as waves but are nothing but water" found in Jigten Sumgön's *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā instruction and going back to Saraha's *Dohākoṣa* (Sobisch 2006, 48–49; see fig. 6).[56]

Thus, the first step in Jigten Sumgön's work was the introduction of thoughts as [91]
(the mind, which is) the *dharmakāya*. Now follows the second step, the introduction of appearances as (the mind, which is) the *dharmakāya*. As a preliminary, one again remains for long periods in a state entirely free from any movement of the mind. Then, parallel to the watching of arising thoughts discussed above, one watches an external object. That is done until the mind and the external object arise as inseparable, without an "inside" and "outside." Thereby, one will finally realize that it has been like this from the beginning (Sobisch 2006, 52–55).

In Phagmodrupa's and Jigten Sumgön's writings, the levels of *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā [92]
and the four yogas of mahāmudrā are not explicitly correlated. However, it is clear that the first yoga is a prerequisite for all practices. Moreover, the third yoga of single taste,

"unobstructed, clear, and empty"	
in ***amanasikara***: space (= mind)	in ***sahajayoga***: thoughts → moving thoughts and spacious mind not different Saraha: waves (thoughts) = water (mind)

Figure 6 Metaphors of the mind.

56 *Dohākoṣa* 72cd: *aṇṇa taraṅga ki aṇṇa jalu bhavasama khasama sarūa*, "Are waves and water different? Cyclic existence and calmness [share] the nature of being like space," (Skt. text and translation by Mathes 2015, 23).

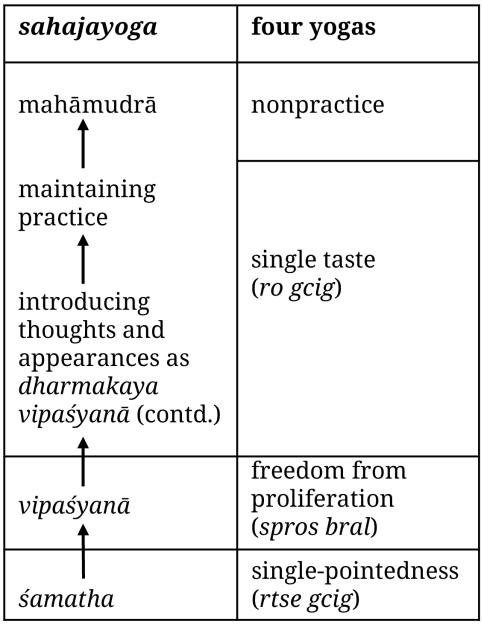


Figure 7 Concordance of sahajayoga and the four yogas.

attained through familiarization with the second yoga of freedom from proliferation, must correspond to the two realizations of thoughts and appearances as the *dharmakāya*. The fourth yoga, again, is the result of familiarization with the third yoga,[57] where thoughts and appearances are realized as the *dharmakāya*. It is, therefore, clear that the *sahājayoga mahāmudrā* approach is a gradual training, where each part ensures the transition from one yoga to the next (see figure fig. 7).

As already mentioned, the lineage for the *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā was traced back by [93]
Padmakarpo through Gampopa, Atiśa, Marpa, and so forth to the Indian Mahāsiddha Kambala. If this is historically correct, it was most probably an aural transmission up to the time of Atiśa and Gampopa. There is no evidence of such terms as "two armors," "outer armor of the view," "inner armor of discriminating knowledge," and "light of the *dharmakāya*" in the works of Marpa and Kambala, as far as they are accessible today. It is, however, noteworthy that we find the following (by now well-known) words at the end of Advajavajra's commentary on Saraha's so-called *Queen Dohā* (i.e., the *Dohākośa Upadeśa*):

> the inborn nature of the mind is the *dharmakāya*, [94]
> inborn appearances are the light of the *[dharma]kāya*.[58]

Unfortunately, the identity of this Advayavajra is uncertain. Mathes (2015, 17–20) [95]
discussed the identity of a (Nepalese?) Advayavajra, who is said to have composed a commentary on Saraha's *The People's Dohā* (*Dohākośagīti*), namely the *Dohākośapañjikā*. According to Chomden Rigpé Raldri and Padmakarpo, he is not the Advayavajra identical

57 Collected Works of Phagmodrupa, vol. 4, 384 (cf. Schiller 2014, 334).
58 Advayavajra's *Dohanidhikoṣaparipūrṇagīti Nijatattvaprakāśatīkā*, D 2257, 207v1-265r2: 264v: *sems nyid lhan cig skyes pa chos kyi sku// snang ba lhan cig skyes pa sku yi 'od//*. Commenting on Saraha, *Dohakoṣopadeśagīti*, D 2264, 28v6-33v4, the so-called "Queen Doha."

to Maitripa.[59] This situation does not allow us to draw many conclusions about the transmission of the *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā to Tibet, except that there could have been multiple sources for it and that Saraha's *Dohā* teachings may very well have been one of those sources. That is indicated by Saraha's use of the "wave and water" metaphor and by the "light of the *[dharma]kāya*" metaphor in Advayavajra's commentary. Moreover, Higgins and Draszczak (2016, 1:212) state that the Kagyu master "Karma Trinlépa [1456–1539] observes that precepts on the unity or "coemergence" [as they translate *sahaja*] of thoughts and *dharmakāya* can be traced to Indian Buddhist Siddha discourses such as Saraha's *People Dohā*."[60]

Another noteworthy occurrence of the twin concepts "inborn nature of mind" being [96]
the *dharmakāya* and the "inborn appearances" being the light of the *dharmakāya* is in a tantra that one finds sometimes cited in Kagyü and Nyingma works, but which appears to be lost. Thus, it is said in the *Inborn Inconceivable Tantra*:[61]

> The inborn nature of the mind is the *dharmakāya*. [97]
> The inborn appearances are the light of the *dharmakāya*.
> This is the inborn inseparability of appearances and mind.

Third Excursion (Part B): Further Aspects of *Amanasikara* and *Sahajayoga* Mahāmudrā

After this brief detour, let us return to the *Gangama* and its commentary. In the Karmapa's [98]
comments on lines 43–47 of the *Gangama*, he first criticizes the view of people who say that "one accomplishes [the realization] only based on the gathering of the accumulation of merit." The Karmapa points out that in contrast to that, in the *Gangama*, where persons of the highest capacity are instructed, "the essential meaning is no mental activity" (*yid la mi byed pa*). In other words, beings of the highest capacity attain Buddhahood here essentially through the single means of mental inactivity. However, this position described by the Karmapa differs from that attributed to the Chinese monk Mohoyen at the Samyé debate in the late eighth century. The Tibetan historiographical tradition, with a few notable exceptions, uniformly reproached Mohoyen for teaching, even to those who did not possess the highest capacity, the immediate entering into a state of mind

59 Mathes points out that the sequence of the four moments and four joys of the "Nepalese" Advayavajra does not fit with Maitripa's teaching. Padmakarpo suggests that he was the younger brother of a Nepalese Paṇḍita. Chomden Rigpé Raldri believes him to be (the Tibetan) Kor Nirūpa, called Prajñāśrījñāna (1062–1102) in Nepal. Mathes suggests that he belonged to the cycle of Maitripa's disciple Vajrapāṇi (b. 1017) (see Mathes 2015, 20; Schaeffer 2005, 66–67).

60 However, they do not provide either reference to Karma Trinlépa's or Saraha's work. The *People Dohā* would be the *Dohākoṣagīti*.

61 *lHan gcig skyes par bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i rgyud*: *sems nyid lhan gcig skyes pa chos kyi sku// snang ba lhan gcig skyes pa chos sku'i 'od// 'di ni snang sems dbyer med lhan gcig skyes//* (see Collected Works of Jigten Sumgön, vol. 9, 489–90).

free from any mental activity without any preparation.[62] This element of the position ascribed to Mohoyen was nowhere accepted in Tibetan traditions.[63]

Following his criticism of merit accumulation (on this level of meditative practice), [99]
the Karmapa introduces the label "clear light" for the state of mental inactivity. I have argued above that in the "view" section of the *Gangama*, where the space metaphor is so prominent, "clear light" means that the nature of the mind is not veiled or obstructed. In the context of the mind being like space, it is a metaphor for visibility. In the present context, the state of mental inactivity, too, there is nothing that shines a light in the literal sense. Instead, "clear light" adds here an element of awareness and clarity that arises from dwelling in a state of "mental inactivity" (Skt. *amanasikara*).

First, it is necessary to understand why that element is needed in the Karmapa's [100]
interpretation. The reason is that mental inactivity alone could be mistaken for a state of mere dullness. That also played an essential role during the debate at Samyé: the party of Kamalaśīla accused Mohoyen of teaching a mental state of mere dullness (*sBa*, 59). To avoid this accusation for the *Gangama*'s *amanasikara*, the Karmapa adds to "not thinking" the element of discriminating knowledge (Skt. *prajñā*) in the guise of "clear light." What is this "clear light" like? It is such that "the many [experiences of] the sameness of all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa become of a single taste." That all phenomena are experienced as sameness presupposes the existence of discriminating knowledge, in this case, the discriminating knowledge arising from meditative practice (Skt. *bhāvanāmayīprajñā*). The following sentence in the commentary describes precisely the function of *prajñā*: "All swarms of thoughts arising from one's mind are only furthering [that] sameness." As already mentioned, achieving the "single taste" indicates that the third yoga of mahāmudrā and the eighth bodhisattva level are attained.[64]

The introduction of this element of discriminating knowledge, although under the [101]
guise of clear light, again shows the influence of *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā, where *prajñā* is essential. This influence becomes even more apparent as the Karmapa continues:

> Furthermore, whatever thoughts arise in one's mind, these thoughts of the [102]
> mind, too, arise one at the heel of another. That is just as in the example of the arising and disappearing waves [that occur] if the wind moves the ocean. Moreover, even though [it seems that] the later [thought] arises and the earlier

62 An early balanced representation of Mohoyen's teaching is found in Nupchen Sangyé Yeshé's *bSam gtan mig sgron* (see Esler 2018, 129–179). See also Schaik (2003) and his blog, *Early Tibet*, presenting the cases of Katog Tsewang Norbu (1698–1755), who referred to Nupchen, and Jigmé Lingpa (1730–1729), see https://earlytibet.com/about/hashang-mahayana/. Meinert (2006) shows how flawed the attribution of some of these views to Mohoyen is.

63 In *Pelliot tibétain* 117, fol. 5v-7v, a manuscript found in Dunhuang in Tibetan language containing instruction of Mohoyen, however, he teaches a means for students who cannot enter all at once into the state of not thinking. Here we seem to find a preliminary step in so far as those of lesser capacity can train to identify thoughts first before they are abandoned. Such a single preliminary step, however, cannot be compared to the vast amount of detailed preliminary means that are taught in Tibetan traditions.

64 It should be noted, however, that according to Jigten Sumgön, this attainment of the eighth *bhūmi* is limited to realization. When the state of a single taste is attained through this type of meditative concentration alone, the countless qualities associated with the eighth to tenth *bhūmi* must be cultivated separately (see Sobisch 2020b, 369).

> one ceases,[65] [in truth] its root is nothing but one's mind because [thoughts] are nothing other [than the mind].[66] If one rests in meditative balance in that state, not wavering and not focusing [on anything], and does not go beyond just that true state, [being] the light of all dharmas, one masters the absolute truth, just as, for example, one raises a light in the darkness.[67]

He repeats here Saraha's powerful metaphor of the water and the waves that Jigten [103]
Sumgön, too, had used in his *sahājayoga mahāmudrā* instruction *Introduction of the Mahāmudrā "Yoga of the Inborn."* Moreover, he teaches here that "one rests in meditative balance in that state," where one does not stop thoughts but allows them to "arise one at the heel of another." In this meditative balance, there is no need to stop thoughts. In fact, stopping thoughts would be an obstruction to this meditative state. Instead, thoughts that are recognized as being "nothing other [than the mind]" are "furthering … the *dharmakāya*." Thus, the Karmapa introduces *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā ideas into the *Gangama*'s no-thought mahāmudrā so that thoughts and discriminating wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*) now play an essential role in attaining the absolute state.

Fourth Excursion: Path *vs.* Fruit Orientation

In conclusion of this topic, we can say that Tilopa teaches a "classical" form of mahāmu- [104]
drā. In reply to a question of Phagmodrupa, Gampopa explains "classical" mahāmudrā as a teaching according to which "all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are from the beginning spontaneously existent, true reality, like space, and a non-dual gnosis of all times, i.e., without interruptions." In contrast to that, *sahajayoga* is such that "whichever thought arises is connected to the four *kāyas*, and therefore it is not held that [the realization] is [from the beginning existant] 'at all times,' in other words, it has interruptions."[68]

That is to say that classical mahamudrā instructions describe a supreme *state* of [105]
absence of mental activity (*yid la mi byed pa*). In contrast, *sahajayoga* uses thoughts (*rnam rtog*) as the *path* to realizing *dharmakāya*. Therefore, in a sense, *sahajayoga* is more path-oriented while *amanasikara* is more directly oriented to the fruit,[69] a point that was also made by the present-day mahāmudrā master Garchen Rinpoche. In an interview, he described Tilopa's *Gangama* of mental inactivity as "mahāmudrā of the

65 This is to say that the arising and disappearing of thoughts create the illusion of thoughts existing independent of the mind.

66 *Prajñā* here makes the crucial distinction between mere dullness of mind and recognition of thoughts as being nothing but mind.

67 Here, "light" is not a quality of the mind but the dharma. This passage shows that the metaphor "light" can be used in one and the same text with different target domains, such as "space-like mind" and "dharma," and thus, with different connotations.

68 Collected Works of Phagmodrupa, vol. 2, 106v: *'khor ba dang mya ngan las 'das pa'i chos thams cad ye nas lhun gyis grub pa chos nyid nam mkha' lta bu dus thams cad pa'i ye shes gnyis med gcig yin te/ rgyun chad pa med pa yin/ … rtog pa gang skyes pa de sku bzhir sbyor ba yin pas/ dus thams cad par mi 'dod pas/ rgyun chad yod gsung/.* For how this is connected to the four *kāyas*, cf. Schiller (2014, 453n37).

69 That the *amanasikara mahāmudrā* as taught by Tilopa is more fruit-oriented is once again underlining that it is a practice suited well for instantaneous realizers.

fruit" and *sahajayoga* as "mahāmudrā of the path."[70] Phagmodrupa, too, pointed out that not processing anything in the mind is the state of mahāmudrā, whereas *sahajayoga* is a (gradual) training:[71]

> Thoughts, altogether, whether good or bad, [106]
> are not processed in the mind—that is mahāmudrā. (…)
> Mind, thoughts, and the *dharmakāya*
> are, from the beginning, born together.
> Since that [vital point] is trained in the mind through instructions,
> we teach it as *sahajayoga* ["yoga of the inborn"].

In the beginning part of Tilopa's *Gangama*, the *amanasikara mahāmudrā* taught there [107] appears to be a state to which those of the highest capacity awake spontaneously upon instruction or with training based on a minimum of instruction. Perhaps in light of the Samyé debate in Tibet and its ensuing discussion, the Karmapa's attempt to introduce *sahajayoga* material to the *Gangama* through his commentary is to "save" this unique instruction. By placing it in the larger context of Gampopa's gradual mahāmudrā teachings, he makes it accessible to all Kagyüpas.[72]

Metaphor analysis in the context of the two methods, "not-thinking" and "using [108] thoughts," leads to new insights. Metaphors like "*dharmakāya* and the light of the *dharmakāya*," "sun and sun rays," and "sandelwood and the scent of sandelwood" often occur in the vicinity of discussions about using thoughts for realizing the *dharmakāya*. Since we can now digitally search through vast amounts of Tibetan mahāmudrā texts, we might be able to semi-automatically identify candidates for a *sahajayoga* approach by detecting its particular metaphors.

It also seems to be the case that *amanasikara* teachings favor apophatic approaches, [109] whereas the *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā teachings allow for cataphatic expressions. An exception is the metaphor "space," which is so fundamental to Buddhism that it works everywhere. It might also be the case that metaphors in the context of *amanasikara* attract and incorporate paradoxes that underline the apophatic approach. These hypotheses deserve further investigation with a more affluent sample of textual material.

Conduct (lines 30–32)

After the detailed introduction to the nature of mind—referred to by the Karmapa as [110]

70 He particularly referred concerning the *sahajayoga* to Jigten Sumgön's *Introduction of the Mahāmudrā "Yoga of the Inborn"* (Interview, Munich, 2004). In the interview of March 26, 2022, he attributed the *state* of *amanasikara* to the last one of the four yogas of mahāmudrā, the yoga of nonpractice (*sgom du med*). To describe the *path* of leaving appearing thoughts alone so that they disappear upon arising (*shar grol*) like a pattern drawn on top of water, he used the *rdzogs chen* term *shar grol ris med*.

71 Collected Works Phagmodrupa, vol. 2, 49r: *bzang rtog ngan rtog thams cad kun// yid la mi byed phyag rgya che//* (…) *sems dang rnam rtog chos sku gsum// dang po lhan cig skyes pa de//gdams pas sems su sbyor ba'i phyir// lhan cig skyes sbyor zhes su bshad//* (cf. Schiller 2014, 454).

72 In some sense, the redactors of the canons, too, "saved" the *Gangama* and made it accessible for a larger audience. But while the Karmapa left the basic text unchanged, the editors interfered massively with the basic text and thus changed its essential character.

"view"[73]—now follow in the *Gangama* several sections that contain further instructions for persons of the highest capacity. These sections—conduct, meditative practice, *samaya*, benefit, defects, and training—are (except for the last one) very brief. The final section for persons of the highest capacity—"training"—provides more details regarding the originally very short section on "meditative practice."

The section that immediately follows "view" concerns "conduct." It says that one should [111]
abandon body, speech, and mind activities and then rest in that state. An interesting detail can be found in a note (*mchan*) of a *Gangama* version contained in the "aural transmission" that was compiled by Drukchen Pema Karpo (1527–1592; *mKha'* 9–19, p. 12, l. 5). Accordingly, the "strenuous activities of the body" that one has to abandon also refer to such things as strenuous bodily postures (*lus gnad la sogs kyi bya rtsol*), presumably the postures of the physical yogic practices. The annotator thus appears to refer to the strenuous yogas of the path of means practices (*thabs lam*) that are not practiced while practicing mahāmudrā. The mahāmudrā practices of the *Gangama* instructions belong to the "path of liberation" (*grol lam*).[74]

Tilopa instructs to "look at the dharmas that have been fully resolved." "Fully resolved" [112]
(*la [b]zla*) are those dharmas for which one has come to a definitive decision. A hint on how to understand this difficult term is provided by the Fifth Sharmapa, Könchog Yenlag (1526–1583), in his commentary of the *Gangama*:

> Come to a resolution about not engaging the mind in any way, i.e., behold the [113]
> true reality of phenomena in the state of the final resolve.[75]

The first part of the sentence repeats the basic text "do not engage the mind in any [114]
way" (*yid la ci yang mi bsam*), and the second part provides the definition, glossing "resolution" (*la zla ba*) with "to come to a definitive decision" (*thag chod pa*). Drikung Kyabgön Chetsang Rinpoche defined "resolution" in his commentary in the following way: "[To look at] the 'resolved dharmas' [means that] one must look at the [true] meaning about which one has come to a definitive decision."[76] Thus, one must look with a definitive conviction at the true reality (*chos nyid*) of phenomena (says the Sharmapa, who refers here to emptiness) or at the true meaning (*don*), the nature of the mind (which is what the Drikung Kyabgön is aiming at).

73 The term "view" (Skt. *dṛṣti*, Tib. *lta ba*) is typical for philosophical texts. Mahāmudrā instructions of the Kagyüpa, at least at this early time, do not maintain philosophical views as would be typical for philosophical treatises, i.e., through logical arguments and so forth. In the present type of instructions, the "view" is usually an introduction with statements about the nature of the mind.

74 See also the Karmapa's remarks on lines 103–107, where he points out that the *Gangama* instructions belong to the path of liberation. See also my remarks on the path of liberation, the path of means, and the path of desire in the section "the training of persons with lower capacity and its metaphors of movement." I do not want to say here that a practitioner has to decide for either the one or the other path, but merely that these are not to be mixed in a session or a retreat. Nowadays—and judging from biographies also in the past—Kagyü practitioners mostly alternate between the two paths, but they keep them apart as two different transmissions and techniques. On the relation between mahāmudrā and the yogas in the teachings of Jigten Sumgön, see Sobisch (2020a).

75 *Zhwa* 551: *yid la ci yang mi bsam pa la bzla ba ste thag chod kyi ngang nas chos rnams kyi chos nyid la ltos*.

76 *la bzla'i chos zhes sems su thag chod pa'i don la lta dgos* (Drikung Kyabgön Chetsang Rinpoche 2011, 38–39).

Conduct is here not explained as in exoteric texts, where we often find instructions to follow disciplined conduct (Skt. *śīla*) as it is laid out in the *prātimokṣa* teachings or the mahāyāna. As I have argued above, this does not mean that the mahāmudrā practitioner abandons disciplined conduct. The main emphasis is on doing whatever you are doing in a relaxed and calm way. In addition, there is the element of mindfulness (l. 32). "Mindful" here has the special meaning of keeping the mind focused, even in everyday actions, on what one has realized about the nature of reality in the meditative balance. [115]

Practice (lines 33–37)

According to the Karmapa's *Outline*, the actual practice is taught twice in the *Gangama*. The first passage is section 2.2.3., teaching the "meditative practice" (*sgom pa*) with five lines (33–37) containing Tilopa's most essential pith instruction. The second occurrence is section 2.2.7., the "training" (nyams su len pa), with lines 56–95 teaching more details for the supreme practitioners and only a few lines (96–102) mentioning the practice of medium and lower practitioners briefly. [116]

Tilopa's most essential pith instruction is "to loosen the mind in a state where body and mind are understood to be without essence and like the center of space, without abandoning or establishing anything, and to rest in that" (lines 34–35). That is preceded by line 33: "The body is without essence; it is like a bamboo cane." Thus, for this meditative practice, it is enough to understand the body as insubstantial. There is no need to visualize any of the channels and *bindus* of the vajra body. The Karmapa's comment chiefly points out that Tilopa's instruction teaches *amanasikara mahāmudrā* has the following vital point: "One does not think anything in one's mind—just that is the essence of the true state." However, if one has no immediate understanding of that, one should refrain from allowing the mind to proliferate about the instruction "without essence" in terms of "existence" and "non-existence" because these conventional terms are not established in the essential true state. Thus, the Karmapa underlines here, on the level of the "essential true state," the single teaching of not thinking and offers no other, perhaps more gradual means. Such more gradual instruction is only offered later, in the section on "training." [117]

To repeat: This is the instruction for practitioners of the highest capacity, but even among them, most will not realize mahāmudrā instantaneously upon instruction. To them, the Karmapa advises simply to put themselves in a state of being "free from the extremes of mental proliferation." He thereby refers to the practice of the second of the four yogas of mahāmudrā. From the sentence that then follows, it is clear what he means by this: Although "being without essence" has been taught, ultimately, one should not let such a statement ("being so-and-so") proliferate in one's mind in a conventional sense as "existing in that way" or "not existing in that way." [118]

The following two lines in Tilopa's instruction (36–37) are a summary of how to proceed in this state free from mental proliferation (the advice will be continued in the section on "training"): [119]

If there is no point of fixation in the mind, that is mahāmudrā. [120]
If you get accustomed and familiar with that, supreme awakening is obtained.

The whole range of the space metaphor is summarized here in line 36, speaking of a [121]
mind in which there is no more fixation. This apophatic realization results from exhaustion, manifesting as an *absence* of all mental activity, a state identified as mahāmudrā. Once one has experienced this for the first time, one must become familiar with it. In Tibetan, the term for getting accustomed to or familiar with something is *goms pa*. This is an intransitive verb closely related to the transitive verb *sgom pa*, the commonly used verb for "cultivating meditative practice" (Skt. *bhavanā*). From this point onward, the practitioners of the highest capacity who have not immediately realized the instructions so far have to practice more gradually (*rim gyis*) by familiarizing themselves for long periods with the yogas of mental non-proliferation and single taste. Ideally, this will then be more and more effortless until the state of spontaneous nonpractice (*sgom du med pa*) is attained, where the borderline between the state of *samādhi* and the state between *samādhis* has entirely vanished. The practitioner attains the fifth path of the bodhisattvas, the fourth yoga of mahāmudrā, and the state beyond the tenth level of the bodhisattvas, namely that of a *vidyādhara*.[77]

Pledges (lines 38–47)

The following section in Tilopa's *Gangama* deals with tantric pledges (Skt. *samaya*, Tib. [122]
dam tshig). "*Samaya*" is a rich term of tantric Buddhism. It is a special observance of avoiding actions that would cause obstacles or worse and of adhering to a particular form of practice that will help manifest the result. The specific wordings of such commitments often play a role in distinguishing one's group from others and creating a unique identity. Similarly, Tilopa here distinguishes the mahāmudrā practitioner of this stage from mainstream Buddhists like those who follow the Vinaya and study and practice the mahāyāna sūtras, and even from those who practice general forms of vajrayāna practice such as recitations of mantras.[78]

Instead of engaging in conventional tantric practices, the mahāmudrā yogi simply [123]
remains mentally inactive (*yid la mi byed pa*). This state has been described before by Tilopa in line 15: "The waves of thoughts dissipate by seeing your mind."[79] We already discussed the wave metaphor above when Saraha, Jigten Sumgön, and the Karmapa used it to show that thoughts are the mind, like waves being themselves water. In the present passage (lines 44–45), remaining mentally inactive is illustrated through another aquatic metaphor. Thoughts may arise, but they are, like ripples (*pa tra*), "self-arising and self-subsiding" (*rang byung rang zhi*).

77 Collected Works of Jigten Sumgön, vol. 7, 182–193.
78 This critique certainly picks up Saraha's words in his *Dohākoṣa* 45–49 (see Schaeffer 2005, 136).
79 Four manuscripts, including the *rGya gzhung* collection of mahāmudrā instructions translated from Sanskrit, the Aural Transmission of Cakrasaṃvara, and the fifth Sharmapa's commentary, have *chu yi pa tra* (*rGya*, p. 87, line 5; *bDe*, p. 12, line 1; *Zhwa* 554). Two minor manuscripts have "water bubbles" (*chu yis*(!) *chu bur*; Lang, fol. 2v2; Nam , 2v2). The canonical editions have "waves of water" (*rba/dba' rlabs*; P, N, D, and C (see Tiso and Torricelli 1991, 218).

Unfortunately, the Karmapa does not comment on this uncommon term (*pa tra*). However, it is again the Fifth Sharmapa who offers an illuminating interpretation. He glosses *pa tra* as "drawings, designs, or patterns on the water" (*chu'i ri mo dri*). Such an interpretation would fit a dictionary entry that defines "*pa tra*" as "a pattern like the endless knot or something similar."[80] [124]

Tilopa advises in line 42 to guard against wishes since wishes cause the clear light to be invisible and veiled. The Sharmapa comments: "The view arising from [philosophical] tenets arises from one's wishes, and wishes are a grasping of the mind."[81] Rejecting the tenets system is a common topic in Kagyü instructions on mahāmudrā (D. P. Jackson 1994, 39–66). In the general mahāyāna or sūtra tradition, however, the view is typically expressed in terms of philosophical tenets. These tenets gradually introduce supposedly higher views that refute the respective lower ones. From the perspective of mahāmudrā, such a proceeding has two faults: One holds a view and grasps it as the truth. That such grasping of views and truths is not acceptable is an established fact for the Kagyüpas. In this context, they usually quote the great philosopher Nāgārjuna (who is, according to tradition, identical to a *mahāsiddha* by that name). Being a towering figure as one of the greatest philosophers of India and a *mahāsiddha,* he is very important for all Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Within the Kagyüpa tradition, his legacy was, according to the first Karmapa Düsum Khyenpa (1110–93) and the Kashmiri mahāpaṇḍita Śākyaśrībhadra (1127–1225), continued by Jigten Sumgön, who they said was his reincarnation in Tibet.[82] In his *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29, Nāgārjuna said: [125]

> If I had any proposition, this defect would be mine. [126]
> I have, however, no proposition.

And his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 27.30 states: [127]

> I prostrate to Gautama, who, out of loving compassion, [128]
> taught the excellent Dharma to relinquish all views.

Philosophical views expressed in the tenet systems of the sūtra vehicle are moreover criticized for creating a "mind-made emptiness" to which one is attached and by which one is bound. Phagmodrupa famously said, using the "fetters" metaphor:[83] [129]

> Even if you practice a mind-made emptiness for eons, that may [appear] fine, [130]
> but it does not help since you are put in golden fetters, and you will never be free.

That has prompted Phagmodrupa's disciple Jigten Sumgön to pronounce vajra state- [131]

80 *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*: *dpal be'u dang cha 'dra'i ri mo'i rigs shig*.

81 *Zhwa* 553: *grub mtha' las byung ba'i lta ba ni rang gi zhe 'dod las byung ying cing / zhes(!) 'dod ni blo'i 'dzin pa yin*.

82 According to Trophu Lotsāwa, the Indian mahāpaṇḍita Śākyaśrībhadra held that Jigten Sumgön was a Buddha. He also reported that Śākyaśrībhadra received from Ārya Tārā the revelation that Nāgārjuna was reborn in Tibet as Jigten Sumgön (Stearns 1996, 131).

83 Collected Works of Phagmodrupa, *Yid bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che dbang gi rgyal po lta bu'i gdams ngag blo gros la ldeb*, vol. 2, p. 48: *blos byas stong pa bskal par bsgoms na kang / gser gyi sgrog tu tshud pas bzang yang mi phan grol ba'i dus skabs med//*.

ment 4.13:[84]

> All systems of [philosophical] tenets obscure the truth. [132]

And in an instruction, he says (Sobisch 2020b, 347): [133]

> May those who confuse the systems of tenets, [134]
> which are a knot of the mind, with the Buddha's intention,
> realize true reality,
> and may their grasping of thoughts be purified in itself.

In this vain, the Karmapa says that "clinging to all these tenets … one is confused" [135]
and bound to birth in saṃsāra while there is not the least benefit from them. Therefore, one has to abandon all attachment and clinging to these tenets. Moreover, in line with Saraha's rejection of all kinds of religious traditions in his *Dohākośa*, beginning there with non-Buddhist schools (ls. 1–36) and including even Buddhist sūtra, mahāyāna, and mantra ("what use is teaching mantras?"),[85] the Karmapa criticizes partial understandings through "instructions and treatises, of the new and old mantra [traditions], of mahāyāna and hīnayāna, and so forth," and quotes the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* that includes in its critique *all* tantra classes. In summary, at this level of meditative practice, the practitioner becomes familiar with mental inactivity (*yid la mi byed pa*) and freedom from all kinds of attachment without resorting to other teachings.

Line 43, "the guarded vows and commitments [of the sphere] of thought are a degener- [136]
ation from the true state," raises some problems. This is evidenced by the various forms in which the line has been rendered by our textual witnesses and the fact that it has been translated differently by Western translators. The Karmapa and the manuscripts that usually are closest to how the Karmapa reads the text, *mDzod* and *Zhwa*, have "the guarded vows and commitments [of the sphere] of thought" (*rtog pa'i [b]srung sdom dam tshig*). Unfortunately, the Karmapa does not comment on the terms "vows" (*sdom*) and "pledges" (*dam tshig*) here. However, it is clear that the characterization of the vows and pledges as "mental" or "of [the sphere of] thoughts" (*rtog pa'i*) is negative: Tilopa himself states that they are a "degeneration from the true state" (*don las nyams*). The Fifth Sharmapa's commentary is again desirably clear on this point:[86]

> Since the vows to be guarded of the three venues and pledges of the stages [137]
> of production and completion, too, which are formed by thoughts, are mind-
> made, [taking them], one degenerates from the absolute way of existence and
> [the meditative practice] turns into an outer phenomenon.

As already mentioned, the Karmapa does not comment on "vows and pledges," but [138]

84 *bden pa ni grub pa'i mtha' ji snyed pas sgrib bya ba 'di bzhugs* (see Sobisch 2020b, 345).
85 Also: "No tantra, no mantra, nothing to meditate on, no meditative concentration" (cf. Schaeffer 2005, 136–141).
86 *Zhwa* 553: *rnam par rtog pas kun nas bslangs pa'i sgo gsum gyi bsrung sdom dang bskyed rdzogs kyi dam tshig rnams kyang blos byas yin pa'i phyir don dam pa'i gnas tshul las nyams shing phyi rol du gyur pa nyid do//.*

he seems to say that there is only one vow or pledge at this stage of meditative practice when he says:

> If one rests in meditative balance in that state, not wavering, not focusing [on anything], and does not go beyond just that true state, … one will master the absolute truth. [139]

Training (lines 56–81)

As described above, the first central section of Tilopa's instructions consists of a detailed introduction to the nature of the mind through similes and metaphors in the "view" section, with further key instructions under the headings of conduct, practice, *samaya*, benefit, and defects. The final section of this first and major part of the *Gangama* is dedicated to "training" (*nyams len*). Since only very few disciples, if at all, are able to realize mahāmudrā through the above very brief instructions on "meditative practice" (*sgom pa*) alone, here now follow a few more detailed teachings regarding the training. This section comprises the second major part of Tilopa's text (lines 56–110). The Karmapa has divided them into three sub-sections: preparations, actual training, and the result. [140]

The section "preparations" (lines 56–81) begins with a noteworthy (but not altogether unexpected) statement that this kind of teaching is characterized as one that entirely depends on a skilled guru, underlining the importance of his blessings (and, implicitly, guru devotion). Mentioning the guru in this section on "preparations" establishes that a connection to an authentic guru and guru devotion are prerequisites of this training. In this context, Gampopa states:[87] [141]

> Concerning our own and others' systems of instruction on the practice of mahāmudrā, our's is the "transmission of blessing." Thus, if the guru's blessings do not enter the mind stream [of the disciple], there is no chance that the true state of mahāmudrā will arise within his mental continuum! … Due to the existence of devotion, it enters based on supplication. For those who have the greatest devotion, the greatest blessings arise. [142]

Much could be said about the term "blessing" (*byin rlabs*, Skt. *adhiṣṭhāna*) and its possible translations in this genre. It suffices to say here that it refers to a mutual relationship between guru and disciple. The disciple prepares for the guru's blessing transmission by practicing the special motivation of the resolve for awakening, which is the cause, the accumulation of spiritual merit, which is the condition, and the ultimate guru devotion of seeing him as the *dharmakāya*, which is the means. Such a disciple is respectful, happy with whatever the guru instructs, and ready to offer his life. On the other hand, the guru can guide others through discriminative knowledge, has great [143]

87 Collected Works of Gampopa, vol. 13, *Khrid chos mu tig tsar la brgyus pa*, p. 1: *rang ngam gzhan la phyag rgya chen po'i sgom khrid lugs ni/ 'o skol gyi 'di byin rlabs kyi brgyud pa yin pas/ bla ma'i byin rlabs ma zhugs na phyag rgya chen po'i don rgyud la 'char mi srid pa yin pas/ … mos gus yod pas gsol ba btab pa la brten nas 'jug pa yin/ mos gus rab la byin rlabs yang rab tu 'jug /* (see also Schiller 2014, 134–136).

compassion, can bear the suffering of others, and does not have the slightest concern for this life. In such a mutual relationship, which Jigten Sumgön calls "the dependent origination of devotion," blessings can arise.[88]

This section of the *Gangama* ends with a remarkable statement about the "qualities of such training:" [144]

> Through a single moment of the clear light of one's mind [145]
> all evil deeds and veils accumulated through eons are removed.

The Karmapa comments: [146]

> Even though until the present day, you may have committed inconceivable evil since beginningless time in saṃsāra, they are such that all the evil and veils accumulated during eons are cleared away by a single moment of clear light-mahāmudrā arising in one's mind. [147]

The statement is remarkable in that it appears to contradict one of the fundamentals of the early Buddhist doctrine, namely that karmic fruits *must* be experienced. At least in Early Buddhism, however, it seems impossible to delete negative karma. Once committed, an evil deed must inevitably lead to the experience of suffering. However, even in early Buddhism, there is a possibility of not experiencing the fruits of evil deeds. It happens, however, only when an evildoer attains through virtuous deeds a state after death that protects him from the immediate experience of suffering. From that state, he can achieve Arhatship, namely Early Buddhism's goal of personal salvation.[89] He would have then avoided the arising of the fruits of his negative karma, but this is undoubtedly a rare exception, actually confirming the above rule. [148]

In the vajrayāna, however, all kinds of practices are offered to purify karma. It could be argued here that these are practices in which great efforts build up an enormous amount of virtue so that the negative karma of a person *almost* disappears within that,[90] but that would be an explanation based on a gradual path. It would not explain the sudden removal of all evil as it is taught in the *Gangama*. [149]

Kyabgön Chetsang Rinpoche offers in his commentary a quote from the *Catuḥpīṭha Mahāyoginī Tantra*, according to which the mind is like a crystal in which there are neither defects nor qualities. There are only outer defilements through contact with sense objects.[91] This probably means that such stains can be washed off the crystal "all at once." Saying that "a single moment of the clear light of one's mind" can remove all veils at once underlines in any case that Tilopa's instructions have a very close relationship [150]

88 For these details of guru devotion, see Sobisch (2020b, 552–556). On the importance of the guru and the need for guru devotion as a means for attaining realization in Kagyüpa Buddhism, see Sobisch (2011).

89 King Duṭṭhagāmanī (101–77 B.C.), for instance, had killed many Tamils in a war, but he also accumulated virtue. Since that virtue caused him to be reborn in a heaven until the time of the next Buddha, he does not experience suffering and will from there be reborn at the side of that Buddha and attain nirvana. However, this is postcanonical literature and certainly politically motivated [see Vetter 1988, 87–88n1].

90 I have dedicated some space in two articles on this subject: Sobisch (2018a) and Sobisch (2022).

91 *Catuḥpīṭha Mahāyoginī Tantra*, D vol. 80, fol. 221v; cf. Sobisch (2017, 25).

with the idea of instantaneous awakening. In that case, the clear light of one's mind is said here to outshine all nonvirtue and negative karma in a single moment. Neither the Karmapa nor the Sharmapa discuss this point.

The Metaphors of the Actual Training: 1. The Root of the Mind (lines 82–95)

According to the Karmapa's outline, we find in the following section of the *Gangama* (l. 82–95) the training of a person of the highest capacity in more detail. Doctrinally, it contains no surprises, but some of the metaphors used here are noteworthy. The first interesting metaphor is "to cut the root of your mind." In this regard, Gampopa quotes Milarepa:[92] [151]

> The precious Jetsun Lama [Milarepa] said that in the [sūtra] system of the perfections, first, one cuts the root of the [outer] objects that are grasped. For example, fire arises from the effort of the rubbing stick, the stick rubbed against, and the human hands. Thereby, a whole forest is completely reduced to ashes. Similarly, through such reasonings as "neither one nor many,"[93] what is perceived is dissected. If, when one has come to a resolution, the perceived outer object is cut at the root, the inner grasping mind—the fetter—comes off by itself.[94] [152]

Thus, according to the sūtra system, "cutting the root" of outer objects is done by logical analysis through which one establishes that these objects are not truly existent. "Cutting the root" is, therefore, in the sūtra system, a metaphor for "getting to the bottom of something by analysis and concluding its nonexistence." Consequently, the inner grasping mind has nothing to grasp and "comes off by itself." Milarepa continues:[95] [153]

> In the mahāmudrā system, it is so that if one cuts the root of the inner grasping mind, the outer object that is grasped—the fetter—comes off by itself.[96] [154]

To explain the cutting off of the root of the inner grasping mind, first, Milarepa differentiates into the mind's characteristics (*mtshan nyid*), essence (*ngo bo*), and nature (*rang bzhin*). The mind's characteristics have two aspects: external objects and inner thoughts. Both are, very much as taught in the *Gangama*, arising from the mind and [155]

92 Collected Works of Gampopa, vol. 8, *Tshogs chos chen po*, 6v: *bla ma rje btsun rin po che'i zhal nas/ pha rol tu phyin pa'i lugs kyis dang po phyi gzung ba'i yul rtsad gcod de/ dper na gtsubs shing dang gtsubs stan dang skyes bu'i lag pa'i rtsol ba las me byung ste/ des nags thams cad tshig nas thal ba yang med pa ltar/ gcig dang du bral la sogs pa'i rig pas gzhal gzhig btang / gtan la phab nas/ phyi gzung ba'i yul rtsad chod na/ nang 'dzin pa'i sems sgrog rang brdal la 'gro gsung ngo //.*

93 One of the four (sometimes five) logical reasonings of the Madhyamaka (*dbu ma'i gtan tshig chen po*) (see Tillemans 1984).

94 Both "fetters" and the loosening of fetters ("coming off") are sub-types of the fundamental space metaphor. The fetters restrict and thereby veil the nature of the mind, which is like space. When the fetters come off, the restriction (veils) disappear, and the space-like nature of the mind is realized.

95 Collected Works of Gampopa, vol. 8, *Tshogs chos chen po*, 6v: *phyag rgya chen po pa'i lugs kyis nang 'dzin pa'i sems rtsad chod na/ phyi gzung ba'i yul sgrog rang brdal du 'gro gsung /.*

96 This shows again that this system of mahāmudrā cannot be considered a "sūtra mahāmudrā" because it lacks the analysis that is typical for the sūtra system, such as "neither one nor many."

dissolving into the mind. They are thus that which arises from the mind (*sems 'byung*) and the mind itself. That is as in the examples of clouds and space, or waves and the ocean. In particular, "thoughts variously proliferate and appear variously as the objects of the senses such as form, sound, smell, taste, and touch—yet they [merely] arise from the mind." Thus, not only thoughts but appearances too have the characteristic of being mind. That is then the first thing to be understood: Appearances and thoughts are the mind since they arise from the mind and dissolve back into the mind.[97]

Secondly, the essence of the mind is none other than the self-awareness (*rang gi rig pa*) that thinks "I" (*nga'o snyam bdag go snyam pa*). In truth, it is the clear (*gsal*), empty (*stong*), unidentifiable (*ngos bzung med pa*), uninterrupted (*rgyun chad med pa*), and naked awareness that has no basis (*rig pa rten med pa gcer bu rjen pa*). Therefore, secondly, one realizes the self-awareness that thinks "I" as that naked awareness without basis. When that realization occurs, one realizes the essence of the mind as follows:[98] [156]

> [It is] neither existent nor nonexistent, neither permanent nor impermanent, and not the middle ground of being free from the two extremes. It cannot be cut by cutting, destroyed by destroying, changed by transforming, or held up by stopping. At all times, it is not coming or going. … [It is] "great bliss," "inborn gnosis," "nonduality." [157]

Concerning the essence of the mind and its variously proliferating thoughts, one must realize the essence of the mind and its thoughts as, thirdly, "by nature nondifferent." If one understands that, just that is "the nature [of the mind]," the essence of all buddhas of the three times. It exists in the mindstream of all sentient beings. To realize that, one has to practice undistractedly with devotion and effort, applying whenever one practices the guru's instructions directly. [158]

To "cut the root of the mind" in the sense of Milarepa's mahāmudrā teachings, therefore, can only refer to the mind whose essence and nature are not yet realized. Such an unrealized mind perceives self-awareness (*rang gi rig pa*) as the thought "I" and thus creates dualistic confusion. To cut the root of that confusion, at first, the complex dualistic structure of, on the one hand, the "I" and, on the other hand, appearances and thoughts is broken up. That is done with the help of the metaphors for the mind—"space" or "ocean"—and for thoughts and appearances, namely "clouds" and "waves" and so forth. Thereby, similarly to the clouds and waves that arise from and dissolve respectively into space and the ocean, one realizes that thoughts and appearances are only the mind. The thought "I" loses its focus points—inner thoughts and outer appearances—and can be experienced as mere awareness (metaphor: "naked"). This awareness has no foothold in [159]

97 Collected Works of Gampopa, vol. 8, *Tshogs chos chen po*, 6v-7r: *rnam par rtog pa sna tshogs su 'phro ba dang gzugs sgra dri ro reg bya la sogs pa dbang po'i yul sna tshogs su snang yang sems las byung ba yin/ de ltar du snang ba sems kyi mtshan nyid yin/.*

98 Collected Works of Gampopa, vol. 8, *Tshogs chos chen po*, 7r: *yod pa yang ma yin med pa yang ma yin/ rtag pa yang ma yin chad pa yang ma yin/ mtha' gnyis dang bral ba'i dbu ma yang ma yin te/ bcad pas mi chod pa/ bshig pas mi shigs pa/ bsgyur bas mi 'gyur ba/ bkag pas mi khegs pa zhig yin/ dus thams cad du 'gro 'ong med pa/ … bde ba chen po zhes bya/ lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes zhes bya/ gnyis su med pa zhes bya ste/*

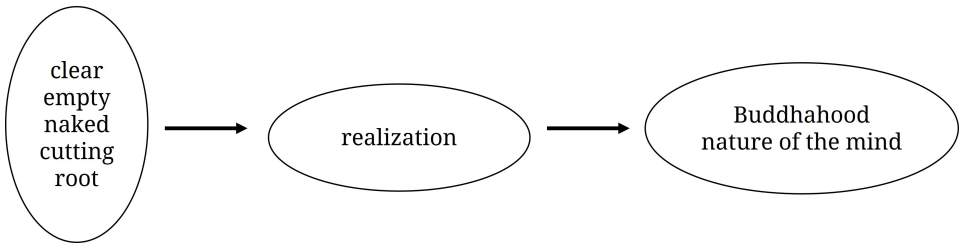


Figure 8 Progressive abstraction.

the vast space of the mind (whose metaphor, "boundless," will be discussed below). The "naked awareness" is experienced as clear, empty, unidentifiable, uninterrupted, and without basis. Finally, on a still more profound level than "only mind," this essence of the mind, the naked awareness, and the proliferating thoughts are realized as nondual: One is not only free from the extremes of duality but also has no middle ground that could serve as a support (*mtha' gnyis dang bral ba'i dbu ma yang ma yin*).[99]

The metaphor "cutting the root of the mind" is, therefore, a complex metaphor with the [160] two elements "cutting" and "root." "Cutting" refers here to realizing the "I" as the clear, empty, unidentifiable, uninterrupted, and naked awareness without basis. The "root" to be cut is mistaking that awareness as the "I." The metaphor can only be explained by recourse to less complex metaphors like clear, empty, and naked. In the end, we arrive at highly abstract absolutes (see fig. 8).

The Metaphors of the Actual Training: 2. Boundless, Deep, Vast, and Released (lines 8, 88, 92–95)

In the context of the actual training for persons of the highest capacity, the *Gangama* [161] states that it is the "supreme king of the view" to be completely boundless/unconfined (*mu mtha' yongs grol*), and it is the "supreme king of the practice" to be boundless/unconfined (*mu med*), deep (*gting*), and vast (*yangs*). Terms like *mu mtha' yongs grol*, literally "to be completely freed from boundaries, to be completely unconfined," are used in Tibetan instruction texts both in a negative and a positive sense, for example:

- negative: the lower realms become boundless (*ngan song mu mtha' med par 'gro*), [162] i.e., the number of births there is infinite
- positive: (obtaining) boundless qualities (*yon tan mu mtha' med pa*)

In our context, together with the other metaphors "deep" and "vast" and in combina- [163] tion with the intransitive verb "to be freed from," the metaphor "boundless/unconfined" is best understood as "a mental state of complete openness; liberation." Such an interpretation is also suggested by line 8 of the *Gangama*, which says:

> If you loosen the fetter, there is no doubt that you will become free. [164]

99 This exclusion of even a middle way as a deepening of the "mind only" position is interesting because here we have a critique of the Madhyamaka that still goes beyond the position of the Cittamātra and rejects a middle ("madhya") position between possible extremes as a mere mental construct. Such statements can also be found in various instructions of Jigten Sumgön.

The inherent meaning of "liberation [of the mind]" is even more evident in Saraha's *Dohakoṣagīti*, which is probably the source of this quote:[100] [165]

> This mind, which is bound by a knot—if you loosen [the knot], there is no doubt that it will become free. [166]

As I have already analyzed in the above section on "space, fetter, and becoming free," being fettered or restrained refers in the broader sense to being bound to constant rebirth in *saṃsāṛa*. In Tilopa's *amanasikara* approach in the *Gangama*, however, "boundless/unconfined" primarily means "freeing the mind from the grip of thoughts," which then leads to liberation from *saṃsāra*. [167]

Through metaphors belonging to the metaphor field of space, one can express either a negative sense, such as restriction, being restrained, bound, and so forth, and, in a specific religious sense, constant involuntary rebirth. Or, in a positive sense, one can speak of freedom from restraints and spiritual liberation. Through metaphor analysis, we recognize that "completely boundless" (*mu mtha' yongs grol*) alludes specifically to liberation from rebirth, which fetters one to *saṃsāra*. [168]

In this section, we furthermore find the metaphor "become released" (*grol*) in line 88: "[If you remain] without rejecting or accepting, all that exists becomes released in the [great] seal (*[mahā]mudrā*)." As is typical for these teachings, when one trains the dwelling in mahāmudrā, both mental activities of rejecting and accepting are seen as fetters that must be loosened to gain release. The Karmapa introduces this in stages. [169]

He first mentions the state where one dwells undistracted in the nature of the mind by having stopped all the swarms of thoughts. He calls this state the "seal of dharma" (Skt. *dharmamudrā*). Obtaining the "seal of dharma" leads to the realization of the unborn nature of the mind. All phenomena that arise in that state are the "great seal," the *mahāmudrā*. In tantric treatises, the *dharmamudrā* and *mahāmudrā* are part of a schema of four seals (Skt. *mudrā*), namely *karmamudrā*, *dharmamudrā*, *samayamudrā*, and *mahāmudrā*. Although the four are not mentioned together in one place in the Karmapa's commentary, all of them still occur. [170]

Generally, the four seals have been defined and redefined many times in the history of tantric Buddhism.[101] Typically for treatises of the highest yoga tantra, Abhayākaragupta, for example, has defined the four *mudrā*s in the context of the stage of perfection (*rdzogs rim*) teachings as follows:[102] [171]

> The external *prajñā* [wisdom consort] is the *karmamudrā* since [she] bestows the joy of activities (Skt. *karma*) such as embracing. The inner *prajñā* is the emptiness and single taste of the central channel (Skt. *avadhūti*), the embodiment of inborn joy, and true reality (Skt. *dharmadhātu*) is the *dharmamudrā*. The nature of great bliss, supreme *bodhicitta*, the essence of the fruit, is the *mahāmudrā*. The various deities emanating are the *samayamudrā*. [172]

100 Saraha, *Dohakoṣagīti* (D 2224, fol. 73v), *'jur bus bcings pa'i sems 'di ni// glod na grol bar the tshom med//*.

101 See for an overview Dalton (2020, 123–141).

102 Abhayākaragupta, *Śrīsaṃpuṭatantrarāja Ṭīkāmnāyamañjarī*, D vol. 7, folio 80r.

karmamudrā	practices with a consort, i.e., the "path of desire" (*chags lam*) and probably also the practices of the path of means (*thabs lam*)
dharmamudrā	stopping the "swarms of thoughts"
samayamudrā	not straying from the true state, not dwelling and not focusing on anything
mahāmudrā	realizing all mental phenomena as mahāmudrā

Figure 9 The four seals.[104]

Jigten Sumgön, for example, has provided the following definition:[103] [173]

> In brief, in any *samādhi* that is practiced, the four *mudrā*s are complete. Thus, if we illustrate that concerning a practice like fierce heat (*gtum mo*), that practice itself of fierce heat is the *karmamudrā*, the arising of bliss in the body when the power of channels and winds—the hidden dependent origination—increases, is the *dharmamudrā*, not going beyond that bliss is the *samayamudrā*, the arising of non-thought based on that bliss is the *mahāmudrā*. [174]

In that manner, the fourfold schema of the *mudrā*s has been adapted to the respective practice by different masters as needed. The *samayamudrā* is not explicitly mentioned in the *Gangama*, at least not expressly as a *mudrā*. However, it is covered by what the Karmapa calls the *samaya* section. Here, in line 46, Tilopa says that one should not stray from the true state, not dwell on any object and not focus on anything. Therefore, practicing in that manner can be understood as the *samayamudrā*. It resembles what Jigten Sumgön says about the *samayamudrā* in the practice of fierce heat: "Not going beyond that bliss is the *samayamudrā*." The *karmamudrā* is only very briefly mentioned in the final part of the text that discusses the practice of medium and lower capacity types of persons. That passage will be discussed further below. [175]

The Karmapa employs the terms *dharmamudrā* and *mahāmudrā* here to differentiate between two states. The first is *amanasikara*, the state where the swarms of thoughts have stopped. The second is where both the nature of the mind and the phenomena arising from it are realized. Once again, we can perceive here the Karmapa's attempt to introduce material from *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā when commenting upon the *Gangama's amanasikara* mahāmudrā. He connects the stopping of thoughts, which is the essential practice of *amanasikara*, with the *dharmamudrā*. However, he also goes beyond that when he explains that the "mental phenomena … are realized as mahāmudrā," which is the essential practice of *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā. [176]

When we summarize our findings on the four seals (Skt. *caturmudrā*) in the Karmapa's comments on the *Gangama*, they can be displayed as in fig. 9. [177]

That means that *karmamudrā* in the sense of "consort" can be neglected by the yogis [178]

103 Collected Works of Jigten Sumgön, *Tshogs chos 'bring po dharmā kā ya*, vol. 7, 317–421, p. 415. Similar: vol. 9, 16, and Zabchö vol. 5, no. 753.

104 Regarding *thabs lam*, for a detailed treatment of the way the early Kagyüpas practiced the path of desire and of means, see my forthcoming book, *The Kusāli Yogi* (Sobisch, forthcoming).

of supreme ability since they consider the practice itself to be *karmamudrā*. They attain Buddhahood on the basis of the other three *mudrās*, which are considered to be the trainings of the mind.

The Metaphors of Capacities: Waterfall, Ganges River, and Ocean, and the "Climbing Up" (lines 96–98)

Here now ends the section on persons with the highest capacity. It covers roughly 90% of the treatise. The remaining fourteen lines deal with the distinction of the three capacities (lines 96–98), a brief teaching for those of medium and lower capacities (99–107), results (108–110), and the conclusion of the text (111–112). [179]

The three capacities are differentiated by an illustration employing metaphors of water bodies (a sub-category of space and movement metaphors). These three water bodies are differentiated by their flow speed and, thus, their "temperament." The analogy obviously refers to the thoughts in the mind of the practitioners: uncontrollable like a waterfall or smoothly flowing like the Ganges. The third water body is one where "the rivers meet like mother and son," namely the ocean. The latter illustration certainly has been chosen because compared to a river, the ocean is still. [180]

The Karmapa explains the three metaphors by illustrating the beginner's mind that clings to the differentiation between merit and evil with a waterfall, the mind of a tantric adept, who has less grasping of phenomena and thoughts with the Ganges river, and the master's nonfocussing mind with an ocean. [181]

Tilopa characterizes the ocean as "where the rivers meet like mother and son." This "coming back together" alludes to the above-discussed metaphors of the clouds and the space or the waves and the water, which illustrate that thoughts are only the mind: Clouds arise from and dissolve back into space, and waves are nothing but water. Such a recognition of the merging of "mother and son" is usually attributed to the fourth yoga of "no practice."[105] The image of the mother and son meeting or merging is a complex and fascinating metaphor that deserves more attention and room than I can provide here. It occurs in several contexts of tantric Buddhism. Most notable is the context of the "clear light of the path (or practice)" and the "clear light of the *bar do*," which is also called the "natural clear light" (Kemp 2015, 41 and 46). [182]

An interesting remark by the Karmapa is found right at the beginning of this section. He says that "the beginner must ascend gradually (*rim gyis 'dzegs*[106]) from the hīnayāna." He obviously uses here the very metaphor that was used to differentiate the approach of the "gradualist" (*rim gyis pa*) from that of the "instantaneist" or "simultaneist" (*cig car ba*). Several Tibetan sources, among them the Nyingma Tertön Nyangrel Nyima Özer (1124–1192), placed the term "climbing up" (*mas 'dzeg* = gradual) a tree like a monkey *vs.* "descending down" (*yas 'babs* = sudden) from the sky to the top of a tree like a garuda into [183]

105 See, e.g., Traleg Kyabgon (2004, 220), the section on "no meditation": "As we give rise to the different levels of the yogas, these two types of luminosity begin to merge until they become indivisible, just like the ocean and its waves. It is the merging of these two types of luminosity that brings about the actualization of the authentic aspect of Buddha's being."

106 *'dzig*]*'dzegs*.

the mouth of the Chinese Hoshang Mohoyen at the Samye debate (Seyfort Ruegg 1989, 98). The Karmapa uses the "ascending" metaphor at the beginning of the section on those practitioners of lower capacities who must practice gradually. This characterization of the last part of the treatise once more underlines that the most significant part of the text is perceived here as an instruction for persons with the highest capacity who realize swiftly and with only a single method.

The Training of Persons with Medium Capacity (lines 99–102)

Those who are incapable of practicing as described above must apply other means. Three of them are mentioned: [184]

- concentrating on the vital points of wind practice [185]
- leaving awareness as it is
- taming the mind through the many limbs of gazing and concentration

The Karmapa does not offer many hints on how to interpret these lines. "Concentrating on the vital points of wind practice" must refer to yoga practices such as fierce heat (*gtum mo*). His remark that practitioners "must remain in the four seals (*mudrā*) and practice them" follows such an interpretation. He probably has something in mind that corresponds to the instructions of Jigten Sumgön already quoted above, namely that in the practice of fierce heat, the practicing fierce heat itself is the *karmamudrā*, the arising of bliss is the *dharmamudrā*, not to go beyond that is the *samayamudrā*, and the cultivation of non-thought based on that bliss is the *mahāmudrā*. [186]

My translation of the second of the three means, "leaving awareness as it is," takes its lead from the Sharmapa's commentary (562). He frames the term *bcud la 'bor* between two glosses, namely "not chasing after whatever might arise in awareness" (*rig pa la gang zhar gyi rjes su mi 'brang*) and "leaving alone/letting go" (*yal bar 'dor*). That describes a practice of a meditative balance with an unfabricated awareness. The non-activity of the mind arises when one ceases to deal in any way with mental content. [187]

The third means, "taming [your mind] through the many limbs of gazing and concentration," has in mind the different forms of gazing that are recommended for meditative practice. For the cultivation of mental tranquility (Skt. *śamatha*), Buddhist traditions recommend many means, such as watching one's breath, looking at small objects, visualizing tiny points or drops of color at different places within one's body, and so forth. These methods are often associated with a particular type of gaze, e.g., inward or outward, and the direction in which the gaze is directed, e.g., downward, straight ahead, or into space. [188]

In Jigten Sumgön's instructions on *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā, the recommended gazing for the practice of *śamatha* is to gaze at something like a small stick of wood, or a small stone in front of oneself without allowing any mental activity concerning the past, future, or present. In the context of practicing *śamatha* "without a support," i.e., without gazing at an object, he teaches that one "gazes into space along a straight line past the tip of the nose." In the context of the introduction of thoughts as *dharmakāya,* one "gazes nakedly" [189]

at the still mind (and then one compares the still mind and the mind with a "stirring thought"). In the context of the introduction of appearances as *dharmakāya,* one gazes at an appearance in front of oneself until there is no more external object and inner mind, and so forth (Sobisch 2006, 35–53).

The Training of Persons with Lower Capacity: Metaphors of Movement (lines 103–107)

The Karmapa outlines the practice with a *karamudrā* as the practice of those of the least capacity. That shows how he ranks the *karmamudrā* vis-á-vis the other *mudrā*s in this context. The present paracanonical structure of the text is, as I am convinced, the original one. It places the path of desire (*chags lam*) at the very end of the treatise—almost as an afterthought—and this is also telling. Nevertheless, from this little evidence, we should not draw too many conclusions concerning Tilopa's and the Karmapa's general attitude toward the path of desire. [190]

Even though the Karmapa says in his commentary that "since the present pith instructions have to do with the path of liberation, I will not go into the details [of the path of desire] here," that does not mean that he categorically rejects the path of desire. It is quite typical for Kagyü instructions on the path of liberation (*grol lam*) to mention the existence of the other path. But then they either simply state that the path of desire "is not taught here" or that one has to "obtain its instructions directly from the guru," i.e., face-to-face. [191]

The practice of desire with a "wisdom woman"[107] belongs to the most hidden teachings of the tradition. It is not hidden because it is such a high practice—it is clearly seen in the *Gangama* and the Karmapa's commentary as inferior to directly practicing the nature of the mind. But the forceful cultivation of bliss by practicing the path of desire with a "wisdom woman" has the highest potential to lead the adept astray. [192]

Moreover, the lifestyle with a consort contradicts the frugal and ascetic lifestyle that most masters of the early tradition after Marpa preferred. Therefore, most of these early masters chose the path of liberation over the path of desire. One conclusion, however, is inevitable: The Karmapa views the practices of the path of liberation at least as entirely equivalent and probably even superior to the path of desire.[108] [193]

Generally, the path of liberation and the path of means belong to the second of the two tantric stages of cultivation (*bskyed rim*) and perfection (*rdzogs rim*). Within the perfection stage, the meditative practice is either "endowed with characteristics" (*mtshan bcas*), i.e., it includes external and internal visualizations, and so forth, or it is without such characteristics (*mtshan med*). The first of these ("with characteristics") refers to the path of means (*thabs lam*) and includes practices such as the six dharmas of Nāropa. The second ("without characteristics") is called the path of liberation (*grol lam*) and includes the practice of Mahāmudrā. Thus, we are dealing here, on the one hand, with [194]

107 "Wisdom woman," "action seal," "consort," etc., translate various terms found in Tibetan texts, such as *las kyi phyag rgya*, *rig ma*, *shes rab ma* (also *prajñā* in Tibetan transliteration), and so forth.

108 The preference for the path of liberation over the path of desire by the early masters of the Kasgyüpa tradition after Marpa will be demonstrated in my forthcoming book, *The Kusāli Yogi*.

the yoga methods endowed with characteristics and, on the other hand, with the practice of the Mahāmudrā, which is devoid of such characteristics and is concerned mainly with observing the mind.

When the path of desire (*chags lam*) comes into play, the matter complicates a bit. [195]
Basically, this path is classified as the path of means. However, if one wants to emphasize that within the path of means, no sexual practices are to be practiced, e.g., in the context of the second and third tantric empowerments, then one divides the path of means into two paths: that of desire and that of liberation—the latter here on a different level and with a different meaning than before. The path of liberation includes, in this case, all yogas except those in which sexual activities are performed (and Mahāmudrā). For example, the second and third empowerments are based on visualization here and performed without a partner. However, strong experiences of bliss are also cultivated through yogas such as fierce heat, only not with a partner but through the specific visualizations of these yogas and other means (see figure fig. 10).

In the context of the paths of means and desire, we find many movement metaphors, [196]
such as "bringing down," and so forth. These are in other more detailed treatises connected with instructions on translocating particular elements of the subtle body, the *bindu*s, with the help of yogic energies via subtle inner pathways. All these practices are entirely described with the help of metaphors of space and movement. These metaphors are, for example, "drops" (Skt. *bindu*, Tib. *thig le*), a metaphor for moveable focus points of concentration within the body; "winds" (*vāyu*, *rlung*), a metaphor for movement, "channels" (*nāḍī*, *rtsa ba*), a metaphor for subtle pathways of such movement in the body; and the "wheels" (*cakra*, *'khor lo*), a complex metaphor for areas of special focus in the body.

The *Gangama* also mentions several other of the most commonly known movement [197]
metaphors in the context of moving the *bindu*s within the channels: bringing down (*dbab*), retaining (*bskyil*), reversing (*bzlog*), drawing up (*drangs*), delivering (*bskyal*), and pervading (*khyab*). In other treatises, we also find synonyms or near-synonyms as well as other terms like spreading (*dgram pa*, *'grems pa*), holding (*bzung ba*, *'dzin pa*), turning back (*ldog pa*), and so forth.[109]

In metaphor analysis, it is again of great interest to investigate these metaphors of [198]
movement and direction that occur in the context of the yogic body. On the background of an immanence-transcendence distinction, we find that most religions localize transcendence "above" (e.g., "heaven") or "from above" (often connected with bright light), and immanence "below" (hell) or "downward" ("falling" into hell). Within the Tibetan Buddhist inner yoga system, there is, first of all, an ancient idea according to which sexuality is a downward-flowing process (i.e., into the genitals). It can be controlled and transcended by stopping and reversal, i.e., upward movement.

Over time, sexual practices, often perceived as transgressive in Buddhism, have been [199]
largely replaced by the notion of an inner heat that can be utilized instead. This "red heat," which stands for "stained pleasure," is first ignited in the navel through yogic

109 For more details on the topics discussed under the present heading, see my forthcoming book, *The Kusāli Yogi*.

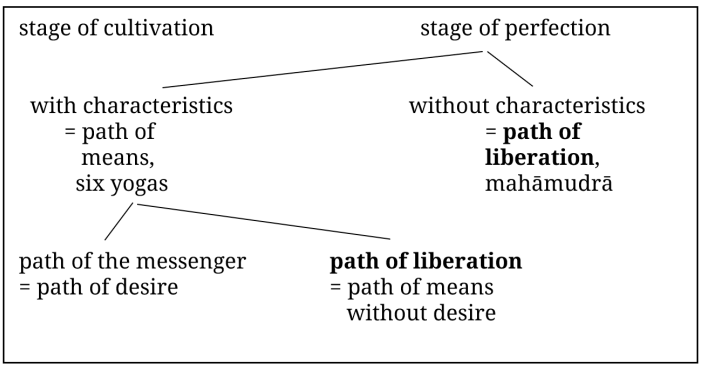


Figure 10 Structure of tantric practice.

practice and directed upwards. Through this inner fire, a "white *bindu*" located under the skullcup, which stands for "unstained (i.e., transcended) bliss," is melted. This drop, flowing downward, then permeates the entire body. In this way, the whole body now experiences a "non-dualistic bliss."

Within this process, the "red heat" represents the "dark (i.e., transgressive) powers," [200] but these powers do not need to be overcome by the light from above. Instead, they are utilized and "offered upwards" to the "powers of light" above (the white *bindu*): The powers of transcendence can only be activated by the powers of immanence. However, once activated, they merge with the forces of immanence into a non-duality.

Mahāyāna Buddhism is not a religion of the victory of good over evil. Liberation [201] occurs when duality ends and the dialectic of immanence and transcendence is resolved. This tantric process of "merging" (*bsre ba*) within the yogic body is laid out very early in Mahāyāna nondualism when it is said that, in truth, one finds nirvāṇa within saṃsāra itself and not anywhere else.

The treatise ends with a few words on results and auspicious words of conclusion. [202]

Summary

Tilopa's *Gangama* was intended for students of the highest capacity. The first half of [203] the text—up to line 56, where topic 2.2.7. "training" begins—was probably even a core instruction for those who operate with only a single method and are eligible for a swift or even instantaneous awakening (tib. *cig car ba*), or who would at least produce results quickly with only a few instructions that contained the essential core of the teaching. For these students, only one method is necessary, that of mental inactivity (Skt. *amanasikara*, Tib. *yid la mi byed pa*). The bulk of the second half, while still for students of the highest ability, contains further instructions with a greater variety of means and a gradual approach (*rim gyis*) to awakening. Only a few lines (96–107)—about 10 percent of the text—provide some guidance for the practice of those of intermediate and lesser capacity. Since they are still practitioners of the mantra vehicle, they too are highly gifted (compared to students of the exoteric Mahāyāna or even the Hīnayāna), but in the taxonomy of mantra, they are not among the outstandingly highly gifted for whom

the first part of the text was taught. Since they do not have the ability to experience the nature of their mind directly, they must practice other methods from the realm of Buddhist yogas of inner channels, winds, and *bindus*, such as the yoga of inner heat (*gtum mo*). Since it is only at the very end, in the last five lines of the practice instructions, that practice with a "female wisdom companion" (*karmamudrā*) is mentioned—explicitly assigned by the Karmapa to mantra yogis of lesser ability—we must conclude that the *karmamudrā* is considered something like a rough wedge belonging to a rough log.

[204] There are several indications that the arrangement of the lines in the *Gangama* as we find it here in the Karmapa's commentary is the original one and that it was only changed by the editors of the *Tenjur*. The first indication is that we find the same organization of the text in the *Collected Works* of Marpa, who translated the text from Sanskrit into Tibetan, as well as in other early text collections such as *rGya*. Second, this form of the *Gangama* has irregular syllable counts per line, which was then "straightened" in the *Tenjur*. Third, as we can see from the Karmapa's *Outline*, this arrangement also makes coherent sense: the text first teaches an immediate introduction to the nature of mind (called "view" by the Karmapa), followed by further instruction on topics common in this context, such as conduct, benefits, defects, and so forth, and at the end some instructions for students of lesser capacity. Fourth, finally, there is also a possible motive for the editors of the *Tenjur* to rearrange the text: A step-by-step (*lam rim*-like) presentation of a path had become standard by the time the first *Tenjur* collections were edited. In contrast, single-means teaching methods such as that of mental inactivity (Skt. *amanasikara*) and instantaneous (or yet very rapid) awakening have fallen into disrepute since the Tibetan historical tradition largely standardized Kamalaśīla's victory and Hoshang Mohoyen's defeat as the result of the Samyé debate in the eighth century.

[205] However, the Karmapa, probably under the pressure of these developments, also influenced the interpretation of the text, though without modifying the text itself. Instead, he gave effect in parts of his commentary to the teaching of another Mahāmudrā tradition, namely "yoga of the inborn" (Skt. *sahajayoga*, Tib. *lhan cig skyes sbyor*). This method of practice, which also originated in the milieu of the Indian Mahāsiddhas, introduces a variety of methods and, thus, a stronger gradual element. That certainly helped to protect the *Gangama* from criticism in the wake of the polemical interpretation of the Samyé Debate by Tibetan scholars and made the text accessible to a larger group of practitioners.

[206] As this paper has shown, the two translated texts have a very high density of metaphors. Almost every noun, adjective, and verb can be analyzed as a metaphor in some passages. These provide the main contribution to religious meaning-making, thereby demonstrating that the "inexpressible" can certainly be made tangible through metaphors. Indeed, since these are instructions for meditative contemplation of one's own mind, the metaphor (e.g., "space-like") is experienced in meditation—at least as the text intends—which then results in a realization of the nature of the mind expressed by the metaphor, either spontaneously or after prolonged habituation to the experience. In this sense, for example, one's own mind is then realized as space-like and clear, unbounded

and unobstructed, deep and wide, and so on. As long as this realization has not occurred, the metaphors remain what they are: a structural mapping from a source domain to a target domain, whereby immanent experiences are accessed in the source domain, unfolding a new meaning in the target domain.[110]

The metaphors found can predominantly be assigned to the metaphors *space* and [207] *movement*, e.g., when the boundedness of the mind is expressed as a *fetter* or *fettering* and the realization of the mind nature as *loosening* (of the fetter) and *coming free*. The metaphor *seeing* (= cognitive activity) is also closely connected to space here: By the fact that seeing in the space-like mind does not come across anything to which it can attach, it ceases. Space and motion metaphors also include *waves* (= thoughts) and *ocean* (= mind) or *clouds* and *sky*, expressing the ultimate oneness of thought and mind.

We could observe that the concrete aspects of religious sense-making here are often [208] apophatic or generally negative in nature, such as "without hindrance" as a definition of space or "being fettered" as a description of the mind being veiled with thought. Metaphors derived from that are then often neutral or positive in nature, such as "space" or "loosen," and the meaning that emerges then takes on abstract cataphatic forms such as "space-like mind" or "becoming free." Moreover, we see that more complex metaphors, such as "cutting the root of the mind," can only be explained by recourse to less complex metaphors, such as *clear*, *empty*, and *naked*. This then often gives rise to progressively more abstract metaphors such as *realization* or *Buddhahood* or *nature* (of mind), which have an absolute status that cannot be further transcended. Such a multi-level metaphor analysis still needs to be supported with more textual examples and should then impact the way we analyze metaphors in religious contexts.

Furthermore, we could observe that *amanasikara* and *sahajayoga* mahāmudrā partly [209] prefer different metaphors. Thus, in *amanasikara* instructions, we find a tendency toward *clarity* with the connotation of "openness," "expansiveness," and so forth (instead of "radiating light"). In contrast, *sahajayoga* instructions like to foreground the simultaneousness of mind and appearances/thoughts with metaphors like *waves* and *ocean*. In *amanasikara*, on the other hand, the main point of *thought waves* is that they come to a standstill, i.e., that the dynamic found dissolves into static. Generally, *amanasikara* seems to emphasize the (static) *space* (= thought-free mind), and *sahajayoga* emphasizes the dynamics of the movement in space (= thoughts). The same phenomenon occurs with the more static metaphor *result* (or *fruit*), which is more strongly associated with the *amanasikara* system, while the dynamic *path* metaphor refers more to *sahajayoga*. We may one day be able to infer a particular doctrinal system or period by the mere presence of certain metaphors in a text. Occasionally we may also have to rethink already firmly established notions of metaphor functions and meanings. That will probably be the case with the light metaphor (for the mind), namely if, as seems to be the case in the *Gangama* at any rate, the luminosity of the mind is not thought of in concrete terms at

110 On the other hand, it should not be fogotten that mahāmudrā masters like Phagmodrupa also criticized a grasping of metaphors in mahāmudrā practice because "if one's understanding is illustrated by examples, it is only constructed" (see Sobisch 2020b, 561).

all, but rather as a “clarity” in the sense of a “being visible” of a quality, comparable to the visibility of the depth of space in a clear, unclouded sky.

All these observations need further systematic investigation. However, we can already [210] state that the analysis of metaphors enables us to decipher the complex meaning of a whole doctrinal system and that we can develop our own perspective on a religious system of meaning by analyzing the types of metaphors that are used—dynamic/static, negative/positive, apophatic/cataphatic, and so forth—and the developments and derivations that can be observed in them—e.g., from dynamic to static or from negative to positive.

Translation: Tilopa's Mahāmudrā Upadeśa: The Gangāma. Basic Text Together with Commentary and Subject-Heading Outline (*sa bcad*)

གྲུབ་ཆེན་ཏི་ལོ་པའི་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་གངྒཱ་མའི་གཞུང་
ས་བཅད་འགྲེལ་པ་དང་བཅས་པ་བཞུགས་སོ།།
མ་དཀྲུ་མུ་དྲ་ཚུ་པ་དེ་ཤ།། ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་མན་ངག ॥
ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་གངྒཱ་མའི་གཞུང་ས་བཅད་བཞུགས།། ཨོཾ་ན་མོ་གུ་རུ་བྷྱཿཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་གངྒཱ་མ་འདི་ལ་འདོན་གསུམ་སྟེ།
༡. མཚན་ཕྱག
༢. གདམས་པ་དངོས།
༣. བསྟོད་བའོ།
[༡. མཚན་ཕྱག]
༢. གདམས་པ་དངོས་བར་པ་ལ་གཉིས།
༢.༡. ཉན་པར་གདམས་པ།
༢.༢. གཞུང་དོན་དངོས་སོ།། འདི་ལ་བདུན།
༢.༢.༡. ལྟ་བ།
༢.༢.༢. སྤྱོད་པ།
༢.༢.༣. བསྒོམ་པ།
༢.༢.༤. དམ་ཚིག
༢.༢.༥. ཕན་ཡོན།
༢.༢.༦. ཉེས་དམིགས།
༢.༢.༧. ཉམས་ལེན་ནོ།།
༢.༢.༡. དང་པོ་ལ་གསུམ(!)།
༢.༢.༡.༡. ནམ་མཁའི་དཔེས་རྟེན་མེད་པར་བསྟན།
༢.༢.༡.༢. ནམ་མཁའ
༢.༢.༡.༣. སྤྲིན་ནམ་མཁའ
༢.༢.༡.༤. ཉི་མའི་དཔེ་བཞིས་སྤྲིན་པས་མ་གོས་པ་བསྟན།
༢.༢.༡.༥. ནམ་མཁའི་དཔེས་བརྗོད་ལས་འདས་པར་བསྟན་ཅིང
༢.༢.༡.༦. དོན་བསྟུ་བའོ།།
༢.༢.༢. ཉམས་ལེན་ལ་གསུམ
༢.༢.༢.༡. སྟོན་འགྲོ།
༢.༢.༢.༢. དངོས་གཞི
༢.༢.༢.༣. ཤུགས་སུ་བླང་བའི་འབྲས་བུའོ།
༡. དང་པོ་ལ་བཞི།
༡. བླ་མ་རྟེན་ཅིང་ངེས་འབྱུང་བསྟེན་པ།
༢. ཉ་སྒོམ་སྤྱོད་འབྲས་ངེས་པར་བྱ་བ།
༣. འདུ་འཛིན་སྤང་ཞིང་དབེན་པར་སྒོམ་ཚུལ།
༤ དེ་ཉར་སྒོམ་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་བསྟན་པའོ།།

The Karmapa's outline of the teaching (*sa bcad*)

1. The meaning of the beginning
2. The meaning of the main part of the text
3. The meaning of the concluding part
2. The meaning of the main part of the text
2.1. Advise to listen
2.2. The actual text
2.2. The actual text
2.2.1. View
2.2.1.1. Through the example of space, it is shown that [the mind] is without support
2.2.1.1.1. Through the example of space, it is shown that [the mind] is not defiled by veils
2.2.1.1.2. Through the example of a cloud, it is shown that [the mind] is not defiled by veils
2.2.1.1.3. Through the example of space, it is shown that [the mind] is not defiled by veils
2.2.1.1.4. Through the example of the sun, it is shown that [the mind] is not defiled by veils
2.2.1.2. Through the example of space, it is shown that [the mind] cannot be expressed
2.2.1.3. Summary
2.2.2. Conduct
2.2.3. Meditative practice
2.2.4. Samaya
2.2.5. Benefit
2.2.6. Defects
2.2.7. Training
2.2.7.1. Preparations
2.2.7.2. Actual training
2.2.7.3. Result of the training
2.2.7.1. Preparations
2.2.7.1.1. Relying on the guru and developing renunciation
2.2.7.1.2. Ascertaining the result of view, meditation, and conduct
2.2.7.1.3. How to abandon distractions and practice in solitude
2.2.7.1.4. Showing the qualities of such training

২. དངོས་གཞི་ལ་གསུམ་སྟེ།
৭. དང་པོ་རབ་ཀྱིས་ཉམས་སུ་བླང་ཚུལ།
২. གང་ཟགཀ་གསུམ་དཔེས་བསྟན་པ།
৩. དབང་པོ་འབྲིང་དང་ཐ་མས་ཉམས་སུ་བླང་ཚུལ་ལོ།།
[৩. བསྟོད་བའོ།]
འཁོར་ལོ་བདེ་མཆོག་ཏེ་ལོ་པའི།ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་ས་བཅད་འདི།རང་བྱུང་རོལ་པའི་རྟོ་རྗེས་གཏུབ།ཀུན་གྱིས་ཕྱག་ཆེན་རྟོགས་པར་ཤོག་བཀྲ་ཤིས་དཔལ་འབར་འཇམ་གྲིང་རྒྱན་དུ་ཤོག །།།

2.2.7.2. Actual training
2.2.7.2.1. How a person of the highest capacity trains
2.2.7.2.2. Illustrating the three types of persons through examples
2.2.7.2.3. How a person of (a) medium and (b) lower capacity train
2.2.7.3. The result of the training
3. The meaning of the concluding part

།། དཔལ་རྡོ་རྗེ་མཁའ་འགྲོ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །
སྒོམ་དཔོན་ཆེན་པོ་ཉི་ལོ་པ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་གསུངས་པའི་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའ་མན་ངག་གརྒྱ་མ་འདི་ཉིད་ཀྱི་དོན་རྒྱང་ཞིག་བདག་གིས་དབྱེ་ཞིང་བཤད་པར་བགྱིའོ།།དེ་ལ་དང་པོ་ནི་དོན་རྣམ་པ་ གསུམ་གྱིས་སྟོན་ཏེ།

སྐད་ཀྱི་དོན་དང་།
གཞུང་གི་དོན་དང་།
མཇུག་གི་དོན་ནོ།

།དང་པོ་སྐད་ཀྱི་དོན་ནི་གཞུང་ན་གསལ་ལོ།

།གཉིས་པ་གཞུང་གི་དོན་ནི།

ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་བསྟན་དུ་མེད་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་།
།དཀའ་བ་སྤྱད་ཅིང་བླ་མ་ལ་གུས་པ།
།སྟུག་བསྔལ་བཟོད་ལྡན་བློ་ལྡན་ནོ་པ།
།སྐལ་ལྡན་ཆོད་ཀྱིས་བློ་ལ་འདི་ཤར་བྱོས།

།དེལེར་ན་ནམ་མཁའ་གང་གིས་གང་ལ་བརྟེན།
།རང་སེམས་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེ་ལ་བརྟེན་ཡུལ་མེད།
།མ་བཅོས་གཤུག་མའི་ངང་དུ་གློད་ལ་ཞོག །།

ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་སྤྲོས་པའི་མཐའ་ཐམས་ཅད་བླ་ན་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་སྟོང་ཞིང་དངོས་པོ་གཟུང་བའི་ཡུལ་དུ་མ་གྲུབ་པའི་ཕྱིར་བསྟན་དུ་མེད་ཅིང་དེལེ་ནི་ནམ་མཁའ་ལྟ་བུ་ཡིན་ཏེ།ནམ་མཁའ་ནི་ངོ་བོ་སྟོང་པ། རང་བཞིན་གསལ་བ། མཚན་ཉིད་འགག་པ་མེད་པ། དབྱིངས་ཀུན་ལ་ཁྱབ་པ་སྟེ། དེ་ཡང་བྱམ་ཆེ་ཆེན་པོའ་ཞལ་ནས་ཀྱང་།

The Karmapa's Commentary with the Basic Text

I pay homage to the glorious Vajraḍākinī!
I will structure and explain a bit the meaning of the Mahāmudrā Upadeśa "Gangama" taught by nonother than the great master Tilopa. To begin with, I will teach it through three topics:

1. **The meaning of the beginning** [211]
2. **The meaning of the main part of the text**
3. **The meaning of the concluding part**

1. The meaning of the beginning

The meaning of the beginning is evident through the main part of the text.

2. The meaning of the main part of the text
2.1. Advise to listen
2.2. The actual text
2.1. Advise to listen

1 Even though mahāmudrā cannot be shown,
2 intelligent Nāropa, the one who endured suffering,
3 who took great difficulties upon himself and has guru devotion,
4 you fortunate one,[111] impress [this teaching] to your mind in this way!

2. The actual text
2.2.1. View
2.2.1.1. Teaching through the example of space that there is no support

5 As, for example, space—what is supported on what?
6 In mahāmudrā, your mind has no object to rest on.
7 Relax in the unfabricated innate state and rest [in that]!

Mahāmudrā, the essence (*ngo bo*) of the absence of all extremes of mental proliferation, <38> is empty, and it is not existent as a thing, i.e., an object of grasping. Therefore it cannot be shown, and the simile is 'like space.' 'Space' is such that its essence is 'empty,' its nature is 'clear,' its characteristic is that it is 'without end,' and it pervades the total expanse. Thus the great brahmin [Saraha] said:

111 'Fortunate one' (*skal ldan*) refers to a person with training or purification in former times or lives (in the interlinear notes of the aural transmission: *sngon sbyangs **skal** ba dang **ldan** pa* and *sngon sbyangs pas **skal ldan** pa*). The term is connected with the concept of a person whose remainders of good deeds from former lifes mature in this life (*las 'phro can*, defined as: *tshe sngon mar yod pa'i las bzang po'i 'phro tshe 'dir smin pa'i nus pa yod pa*, in this sense clearly referring to former lives). Thus a 'fortunate one' is accordingly not blessed with a good destiny or by a god, but by his own deeds, as far as one can speak of 'own' when referring to a former life time.

ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་སྐད་པ་དེ། །
ནམ་མཁའི་རང་བཞིན་ལྟ་བ་འདྲ། །
བསྒོམ་ཡང་ཕར་ལ་མི་བསྒོམ་ཞིང་། །
ཡེངས་ཀྱང་ཚུར་ལ་མི་ཡེངས་པར། །
མ་བཅོས་གཤུགས་མའི་ངང་ཉིད་དོ། །ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ། །

བཅིངས་པ་གློད་ན་གོལ་བར་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད། །
དཔེར་ན་ནམ་མཁའི་དཀྱིལ་བལྟས་མཐོང་བ་འགགས་པར་འགྱུར། །
དེ་བཞིན་སེམས་ཀྱིས་སེམས་ལ་བལྟས་བྱས་ན། །
རྣམ་རྟོག་ཚོགས་འགགས་བློ་མེད་བྱང་ཆུབ་འཐོབ། །

※ དཔེར་ན་མི་ཉེས་པ་ཅན་སྨྲག་བསྐལ་དེ་ལས་ཐར་བ་བཞིན་དུ། གང་ཟག་ཐ་མལ་པ་ཞི་གསུམ་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཟོ་བ་ཙམ་དུ་གྱུར་ན་ཡང་དགའ་བ་ཆེན་པོ་དང་ལྡན་ཏེ། དེ་བས་ཀྱང་སྒོམ་པ་དང་བྲལ་བའི་མཚན་ཉིད་དགའ་བ་དང་མི་དགའ་བ་དང་།བདེ་བ་དང་སྡུག་བསྔལ་བ་ལ་སོགས་པ་གང་གིས་ཀྱང་མི་གནོད་པའི་དོན་དེ་ཉིད་ཤེས་ན། འཁོར་བ་དང་རྒྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པའི་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་རྟ་བ་རང་གི་སེམས་ཉིད་ཡིན་པར་གསུངས་ཏེ། ས་ར་ཧའི་ཞལ་ནས།

སེམས་ཉིད་གཅིག་བུ་ཀུན་གྱི་ས་བོན་ཏེ། །
གང་ལ་སྣིད་དང་རྒྱ་ངན་འདས་འཕྲོ་ཞིང་། །
འདོད་པའི་འཇུག་བྱ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྟེར་མཛད་པ། །
ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་འདྲའི་སེམས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ། །

དཔེར་ན་ས་རྩངས་སྤྲིན་ནི་ནམ་མཁའི་དབྱིངས་སུ་དེངས། །
གར་ཡང་སོང་བ་མེད་ཅིང་གར་ཡང་གནས་པ་མེད། །
དེ་བཞིན་སེམས་ལས་བྱུང་བའི་རྟོག་ཚོགས་ཀྱང་། །
རང་སེམས་མཐོང་བས་རྟོག་པའི་ཏ་རྩངས་དྲངས། །

What is called “mahāmudrā”
is like looking at the nature of space.
It is that unfabricated, innate state
in that it is practicing, yet not practicing external [objects],
and roving, yet not getting distracted internally.

2.2.1.1.1. Teaching through the example of space that there is no defilement by veils

8 If you loosen the fetter, there is no doubt that you will become free.
9 For example, having looked at the center of space, seeing ceases.
10 Similarly, having looked with the mind at the mind,
11 the swarms of thoughts cease, and supreme awakening is obtained.

For example, as a person with faults [can enjoy] the relieve from his sufferings, an ordinary person may have great happiness even if he has only a mere intellectual understanding of the characteristics of mahāmudrā. But if, in addition to that, he understands the true state of ‘the characteristic of freedom from mental proliferation,’ [namely that] one cannot be harmed by anything such as happiness and unhappiness or pleasure and pain, then that is said to be the root of all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, that nature of the mind of ours. As Saraha said:

The nature of mind alone is the seed of all.
I bow down to the mind that is like a wish-fulfilling jewel,
in which existence and nirvāṇa unfold
and that bestows all desired results.

2.2.1.1.2. Teaching through the example of a cloud that there is no defilement by veils

12 A cloud of ground mist, for example, dissolves into the expanse of the sky.
13 It has nowhere to go; it has no place to remain.
14 Similarly, the swarms of thoughts arising from the mind, too,
15 [are such that] the waves of thoughts dissipate by seeing your mind.

དཔེར་ན་ས་རྩངས་སྤྲིན་ནི་ནམ་མཁའི་དབྱིངས་སུ་དེངས་ཞེས་པ་ནས། རང་སེམས་མཐོང་བས་རྟོག་པའི་ཤ་རྩའམ་དྲངས་ཞེས་པའི་བར་གྱིས་ནི། །རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ་གང་ནས་ཀྱང་མ་འོངས་པ། གང་དུ་ཡང་མི་འགྲོ་བ་སྟ་ཕྱི་མེད་པ། དེ་ལྟ་བུའི་རིག་པ་དེ་ས་རྩངས་ཀྱི་སྤྲིན་དང་འདྲ་བར་འབྱུང་བ་ཡིན། །དེ་ཡང་ས་རྩངས་ཀྱི་སྤྲིན་དེ་ཡང་། དང་པོ་ཚར་པ་བབས་པ་ལས་བྱུང་ཡང་། ས་རྩངས་མེད་པའི་སྟོན་དུ་ཆར་བ་མ་གྲུབ་ཅིང་། གཅིག་དང་གཅིག་དུས་མཉམ་ཡིན་པའི་ཕྱིར་ན། དེ་ལྟ་བུའི་རྟོགས་པའི་ཚོགས་ཀྱང་། ཕུག་རྒྱ་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་དང་དུས་མཉམ་དུ་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན་པར་ཤེས་པར་གྱིས། དེ་ཡང་ཕུག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་དེ་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ངོ་མ་ཤེས་པས་འཁོར་བར་འཕྱམས་པ་ཡིན་ནོ། །རང་གི་སེམས་ཉིད་དེ་ཉིད་མཐོང་ན་ནི།།རྟོག་པའི་ཐ་རྩངས་ཐམས་ཅད་དྲངས་ནས་གཉིས་མེད་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་གནས་སུ་རང་རིག་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་སེམས་ཉིད་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་རྟོགས་པའོ། །

དཔེར་ན་ནམ་མཁའི་རང་བཞིན་ཁ་དོག་དབྱིབས་ལས་འདས། །
དཀར་ནག་དག་གིས་ཁོས་ཤིང་འགྱུར་བ་མེད། །
དེ་བཞིན་རང་སེམས་སྐྱིང་པོ་ཁ་དོག་དབྱིབས་ལས་འདས། །
དགེ་སྡིག་དཀར་ནག་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་ཁོས་མི་འགྱུར། །

ཅ ནམ་མཁའི་རང་བཞིན་ཞེས་མིང་དུ་བཏགས་པ་དཀར་བ་དང་། ནག་པ་དང་། སེར་བ་དང་། ལྗང་བ་དང་། གང་དུ་ཡང་མ་གྲུབ་པ་ཡིན། དེ་བཞིན་རང་གི་སེམས་ཀྱི་སྐྱིང་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱང་སེམས་ཞེས་བརྗོད་ཀྱང་། དངོས་པོ་རྒྱུམ་པོ་དང་། འཇོང་མོ་དང་།གླུ་བཞི་དང་སོག་ཀ་ལ་སོགས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པ་མ་གྲུབ་ཅིང་།ཁ་དོག་ཀྱང་གོང་དང་མཚུངས་པ་དང་། ཐམས་ཅད་མ་གྲུབ་པ་ཡིན་ཞིང་། ནམ་མཁའ་ལ་དབྱིབས་དང་དཀར་ནག་མ་གྲུབ་ཅེས་པ་ནི་གོང་དུ་བསྟན། དེ་བཞིན་དུ་རང་གི་སེམས་ཉིད་དེ་མཐོང་ན་དགེ་བ་དང་སྡིག་པ་གང་གིས་ཀྱང་གནོད་པ་མ་བསྐྱལ། ཕན་མ་བཏགས་མི་འདོགས།།འདོགས་པར་མི་འགྱུར་བ་ཡིན།དེ་ཡང་རང་གི་སེམས་མ་གཏོགས་པ། སངས་རྒྱས་གཞན་ན་ཡོད་པར་མ་གསུངས། དེ་ཡང་མདོ་ལས། །
སེམས་རྟོགས་ན་སངས་རྒྱས་ཡིན་པས་སངས་རྒྱས་གཞན་དུ་མི་བཙལ་བའི་འདུ་ཤེས་རབ་ཏུ་བསྟོམ་པར་བྱའོ། །ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ། །

Thoughts do not come from anywhere, do not go anywhere; they do not exist earlier or later. Such an awareness (*rig pa*) occurs like a cloud of ground mist. With that regard, it is so that this cloud of ground mist at first [seems to] arise from rainfall, but before, when there was no ground mist, there was no rain, <39> and [then], each of them occurs simultaneously [with the other]. Therefore, understand in the same way that the swarms of thoughts, too, that arise from your mind arise simultaneously with mahāmudrā! Furthermore, because sentient beings do not recognize such a mahāmudrā, they roam in saṃsāra. If you see just that nature of your mind, all waves of thoughts dissipate, and in that abode of great non-dual bliss, you realize the self-aware gnosis, the nature of the mind, mahāmudrā.

2.2.1.1.3. Teaching through the example of space that there is no defilement by veils

16 For example, the nature of space is beyond color and shape;
17 it does not get stained with black and white.
18 Similarly, the essence of one's own mind is beyond color and shape,
19 and it does not get stained with virtuous, evil, white, or black properties.

What is termed 'nature of space' does not exist as white, black, yellow, green, or anything else. Similarly, just that essence of your mind, too, is called 'mind,' but it does not exist as a thing with a round, oval, square, triangular or any other form. Moreover, [concerning] color, too, it is as before, and [thus] it does not exist [like that]. [Therefore] it is taught above that concerning space, no shape and [color such as] white and black exists. Similarly, if you see the nature of your mind, neither virtue nor evil has inflicted harm or caused benefit [to it], are doing that, or will do that. Moreover, it has not been taught that apart from your mind, a Buddha exists somewhere else. Thus it has been taught in a sūtra:[112]

Since it is Buddhahood when you realize the mind, practice firmly [with] the awareness of not [having to] seek the Buddha anywhere else.

112 *sangs rgyas*] *ye shes. Āryātajñāna Mahāyānasūtra*, D vol. 54, 153r.

དཔེར་ན་གསལ་དྲངས་ཤིའི་སྙིང་པོ་དེ། ।
བསྐལ་པ་སྟོང་གི་མུན་པས་སྒྲིབ་མི་འཇུར། ।
དེ་བཞིན་རང་སེམས་སྙིང་པོ་འོད་གསལ་དེ། ।
བསྐལ་པའི་འཁོར་བས་སྒྲིབ་པར་མི་ནུས་སོ། ।

ཅ དཔེར་ན་གསལ་དྲངས་ཤིའི་སྙིང་པོ་དེ་ཞེས་པ་ནས།།བསྐལ་པའི་འཁོར་བས་སྒྲིབ་པར་མི་ནུས་སོ་ཞེས་པའི་བར་གྱིས་ནི།དཔེར་ན་ཤིའམ་དེ་ཤིད་གདོད་མ་ནས་གསལ་བའི་རང་བཞིན་ཅན་ཡིན་པས། མུན་པ་ཤིན་ཏུ་གནག་པའི་རང་བཞིན་ཅན་དེ་ཤིད་བསྐལ་པའི་བར་དུ་བསགས་པར་གྱུར་ཀྱང་ཤིའི་མའི་འོད་ཟེར་གསལ་བ་སྐད་ཅིག་མ་ཤིད་ཀྱིས་མུན་པའི་ཚོགས་བཅོམ་ཞིང་གསལ་བར་གྱུར་པ་དེ་བཞིན་དུ་རང་གི་སེམས་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་འོད་གསལ་བ་དེ་ཤིད་སྐད་ཅིག་མ་ཤིད་ལ་རྟོགས་ན། བསྐལ་པར་བསགས་པའི་སྡིག་པ་དང་སྒྲིབ་པ་མ་ལུས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐད་ཅིག་ཤིད་ལ་སེལ་བར་འགྱུར་ཞིང་། བྱང་སྟེ་དག་པར་འགྱུར་བའི་ཕྱིར་ན།འཁོར་བར་བསྒྲིབ་བར་མི་ནུས་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་དོན་ནོ། ।

དཔེར་ན་ནམ་མཁའ་སྟོང་པར་ཐ་སྙད་རབ་བརྟགས་ཀྱང་། ।
ནམ་མཁའ་ལ་ནི་འདི་འདྲར་བརྗོད་དུ་མེད། ।
དེ་བཞིན་རང་སེམས་འོད་གསལ་བརྗོད་གྱུར་ཀྱང་། ।
བརྗོད་པས་འདི་འདྲར་གྲུབ་ཅེས་ཐ་སྙད་གདགས་གཞི་མེད། ।

ཅ ནམ་མཁའ་སྟོང་པ་ཞེས་བརྗོད་ཀྱང་།ནམ་མཁའ་ལ་དབྱིབས་གྲུ་བཞི་དང་། རླུང་པོ་དང་འཇོང་མོ་ལ་སོགས་པ་གང་དུའང་མ་གྲུབ་ཅིང་།བརྗོད་དུ་མེད་པ་དང་མཚུངས་པར།སེམས་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་ལ་ཡང་།མིང་ཙམ་དུ་སེམས་ཞེས་བརྗོད་ཀྱང་།དབྱིབས་དང་ངོ་བོ་འདི་ལྟ་བུ་ཞེས་བརྗོད་དུ་མེད་པའི་ཕྱིར་རོ། ।

དེ་ལྟར་སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་གདོད་ནས་ནམ་མཁའ་འདྲ། ।
ཚོས་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་དེ་རྟ་མ་འདུས་མེད། ।

ལུས་ཀྱི་བྱ་བ་ཡོངས་ཐོངས་རྣལ་འབྱོར་དལ་བར་སྟོན། ।
ངག་གི་སྨྲ་བརྗོད་མེད་དེ་གྲགས་སྟོང་བྲག་ཚ་འདྲ། ।
ཡིད་ལ་ཅི་ཡང་མི་བསམ་ལ་བརྟེའི་ཚོས་ལ་ཕྱོས། ।

2.2.1.1.4. Teaching through the example of the sun that there is no defilement by veils

20 For example, the essence of the clear, bright sun;
21 it cannot be veiled by the darkness of a thousand eons.
22 Similarly, the clear light that is the essence of one's mind
23 cannot be veiled by [the mind] revolving [in saṃsāra] for eons.

The sun, for example, has always been endowed with the nature of clarity. <40> So even if there is a darkness that is extremely black in nature and accumulated over eons, a single instant of clear sunlight can overcome the accumulated darkness, [causing] it to then clear up. Similarly, if you realize in a single instant the essence of your mind, namely that clear light, without exception, all evil and the veils accumulated for eons will be cleared away in a single instant and purged. Since it has become clean, it is described as "cannot be veiled by revolving [in saṃsāra]."

2.2.1.2. Teaching through the example of space that nothing can be expressed

24 Even though you may, for example, apply the designation[113] 'empty' [to] space,
25 space is ineffable in that way.
26 Similarly, although you may express the mind [as]'clear light,'
27 there is no basis for imputing the label 'it exists like that' through [that] expression.

[This is so] because even though space is designated "empty," space does not exist being "square," "round," "oval," etc., and cannot be designated [in any way]. Analogous to that, you can, as a mere label, express the essence of the mind as "mind," but [in truth] it cannot be expressed as having any form or essence, saying "it is like this."

2.1.1.3. Summary

28 Accordingly, the nature of the mind is primordially like space.
29 No dharma is not included in that.

2.2.2. Conduct

30 Abandon bodily activities completely; dwell leisurely in the genuine state.[114]
31 Remain silent, for sound is empty, like an echo.
32 Do not engage the mind in any way; look at the dharmas that have been fully resolved.

113 *brtags*] *btags.*
114 *rnal 'byor*] *rnal mar.*

ལུས་ལ་སྙིང་པོ་མེད་པ་སྣུག་མའི་སྟོང་པོ་འདྲ། །
སེམས་ནི་ནམ་མཁའི་དཀྱིལ་ཕྱར་བསམ་པའི་ཡུལ་ལས་འདས། །
དེ་ཡི་ངང་ལ་བཏང་བཞག་མེད་པར་གློད་ལ་ཞོག །

❦ རང་གི་སེམས་ཉིད་གོང་དུ་ཇི་ཕྱར་བརྗོད་པ་དང་འདྲ་བར། དབྱིབས་དང་དོ་བོ་གང་ཡང་མ་གྲུབ་པ་དེ་ཉིད་ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་ཡིན་པ་སྟེ། དེ་རྟོགས་པར་བྱེད་པའི་ཐབས་ལ་རི་ཁྲོད་དགོན་པ་ལ་སོགས་པར་གཅིག་ཏུར་སྣུམ་བརྗོད་མེད་པའི་ངང་ལས། སྣུམ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་བཞིན་ཅ་ཕྱ་བྱའི་ངང་ལ་མཉམ་པར་བཞག་ཅིང་ཡིད་ལ་ཅི་ཡང་མི་བསམ་པ་དེ་ཉིད་དོན་གྱི་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ཡིན་ཏེ། བསམ་པའི་ཡུལ་ལས་འདས་པའི་ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་གོང་དུ་བརྗོད་པ་ཕྱ་བྱའི་དོན་དེ་ཉིད་མ་རྟོགས་ནས་སྣུམ་བྱང་སྙིང་པོ་མེད་པས་ཏེ། ཤེས་པའི་མཐའ་དང་བྲལ་བའི་ངང་ལ་འཇོག་པའོ། །

སེམས་པ་གཏད་སོ་མེད་ན་ཕུག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡིན། །
དེ་ལ་གོམས་ཤིང་འདྲིས་ན་བླ་མེད་བྱང་ཆུབ་འཐོབ། །

❦ སེམས་ཉིད་སྟོས་པའི་མཐའ་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་བྲལ་བ་དེ་ཉིད། འདུས་བྱས་ཀྱི་ཆོས་གང་ལ་ཆགས་ཀྱང་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་མི་རྟོགས་ཤིང་། འཁྱལ་པའི་རྒྱུ་ཡིན།འདུས་བྱས་དང་འདུས་མ་བྱས་ཀྱི་ཆོས་གང་ལ་ཡང་མ་ཆགས་ཤིང་། དོན་དེ་ཉིད་གློང་དུ་སྒྱར་ན། ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཡིན་ཞིང་།དེ་ཉིད་གོམས་ཤིང་འདྲིས་ན་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཐོབ་ཅེས་བྱ་བའི་དོན་ཡིན་ནོ། །

ཐུགས་སུ་སྣང་དང་ཕ་རོལ་ཕྱིན་པ་དང་། །
འདུལ་བ་མདོ་སྡེ་སྔོན་སྟོང་ལ་སོགས་པ། །
རང་རང་གཞུང་དང་གྲུབ་པའི་མཐའ་ཡིས་ནི། །
འོད་གསལ་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་མཐོང་མི་འགྱུར། །
ཞེ་འདོད་བྱང་བས་འོད་གསལ་མ་མཐོང་བསྒྲིགས། །

2.2.3. Meditative practice

> 33 The body is without essence; it is like a bamboo cane.
> 34 The mind is beyond the domain of thoughts, like the center of space.
> 35 Loosen [the mind] in that state, without abandoning or establishing [anything], and rest [in that].

As expressed above, the nature of one's mind does not exist as shape and essence at all. Just that is the essence of all phenomena. As a means for realizing that, starting from a state where one dwells alone [and] in silence, such as in a secluded mountain retreat, one rests in meditative balance in a state where all sounds are [recognized] as the dharmadhātu, like an echo.
One does not think anything in one's mind—just that is the essence of the true state. If you do not understand just that true state of the essence of all phenomena beyond the sphere of the thinking as expressed above, [just] place yourself in a state of being free from the extremes of mental proliferation. Why? [When it was said] that, like a bamboo cane, [the body] is without essence, even though it was said "without essence," in the essential true state <41> conventional labels such as 'existing' and 'not-existing' are not existing [and thus you do not let your mind to proliferate about "with" or "without essence"].

> 36 If there is no point of fixation in the mind, that is mahāmudrā.
> 37 If you get accustomed and familiar with that, you obtain supreme awakening.

That is the nature of the mind, free from all extremes of proliferation. However, being attached to any produced phenomena,[115] one does not realize that mahāmudrā and it leads to confusion. If one is not attached to any produced or non-produced phenomena whatsoever and completely masters the true state of [all] that, that is 'mahāmudrā.' That is the meaning of "if one gets accustomed and familiar to that, one obtains awakening."

2.2.4. *Samaya*

> 38 Neither through recitations in the mantra, through the perfections,
> 39 nor through such things as the baskets of Vinaya and Sūtra,
> 40 and [their] respective scriptures and tenets
> 41 will one perceive the clear light—mahāmudrā.
> 42 Through the arising of wishes, the clear light is invisible and veiled.[116]

115 "Procured phenomena" (skr. *saṃskṛta*, tib. *'du byas*). A technical term from Buddhist philosophy. It expresses that a material or mental phenomenon is, on the one hand, produced from causes and conditions and, on the other hand, is now subject to perishing as such, as soon as the causes and conditions are no longer sufficient (which is necessarily sooner or later *always* the case).

116 The Sharmapa (*Zhwa* 553) comments: "The view arising from tenets arises from one's wishes, and wishes are a grasping of the mind. Thereby one not only fails to see the clear light [of the mind], but the knowledge [of the way things] exist [and how they] appear is veiled."

།། བཀའ་བསྟན་བཅོས་གསང་སྒགས་གསར་རྙིང་། ཐེག་པ་ཆེ་ཆུང་ལ་སོགས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དོན་དམ་པའི་དེ་ཉིད་ཁོང་དུ་མ་ཆུད་ཅིང་། དེ་ཉིད་ལ་ཆགས་པ་ཡིས་འཁོར་བའི་རྒྱུ་མ་གཏོགས་པ་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་རྟོགས་པའི་གོགས་སུ་མི་འགྱུར་བ་ཡིན་ཏེ། དེ་ཡང་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་གསང་བ་སྙིང་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་ལས།

མ་རྟོགས་པ་དང་ལོགས་པར་རྟོག །
དགོངས་པ་འདུལ་བ་གསང་བ་དང་། །
ཕྱོགས་རྟོགས་ཡང་དག་ཉིད་མ་རྟོགས། །
དོན་དམ་འདི་ལ་ཐེ་ཚོམ་ཟ། །ཞེས་གསུངས་པའི་དོན་འདི་ལྟ་བུ་ལ་དགོངས་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ།

དེ་ཡང་གྱུབ་མཐའ་སོ་སོ་ལ་ཞེན་ཅིང་མ་རྟོགས་པས་འཁྱལ་ཞིང་། རིགས་དྲུག་གི་ས་བོན་མ་གཏོགས་པ་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་རྟོགས་པ་ལ་སྨྲ་ཚམ་ཡང་མི་ཕན་པ་སྟེ། དེའི་ཕྱིར་ན་སོ་སོ་རང་རང་གི་གྱུབ་མཐའ་ལ་ཆགས་པ་དང་ཞེན་པ་མ་བྱས་ན། ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་རྟོགས་པིང་། ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་དེ་ཁོ་ན་ཉིད་རྟོགས་པིང་ཁོང་དུ་ཆུད་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། །

རྟོག་པའི་སྒྲུང་སྟོམ་དམ་ཚིག་དོན་ལས་ཉམས།
།ཡིད་ལ་མི་བྱེད་ཞེ་འདོད་ཀུན་དང་བྲལ། །
རང་བྱུང་རང་ཞི་ཆུ་ཡི་པ་ཏྲ་འབྲ། །
མི་གནས་མི་དམིགས་དོན་ལས་མི་འདའ་ན། །
དམ་ཚིག་མི་འདའ་སྐན་པའི་སྒོན་ཟེ་ཡིན། །

།། གོང་དང་མཚུངས་པ་ལྟ་བྱར་འཇིག་རྟེན་པའི་སྣང་དོ་ལ་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཚོགས་གསོག་པའི་རྟེན་འབའ་ཞིག་བསྒྲུབ་ཅིང་འདི་ཡིས་སངས་རྒྱ་བར་བྱེད་ཟེར་ཡང་། སྣིང་པོའི་དོན་ཡིད་ལ་མ་ བྱེད་པ། དགེ་བས་ཕན་པ་སྒྲུ་ཚམ་མ་བྱས། །སྟིག་པས་གནོད་པ་སྒྲུ་ཚམ་ཡང་མ་བསྐྱལ་ཞིང་། ཞེན་པ་དང་འདོད་པ་ཀུན་དང་བྲལ་བའི་འོད་གསལ་བ་དེ་ཉིད་ཁོང་དུ་ཆུད་ཅིང་རྟོགས་ནས། །ཐེག་པས་གནོད་པ་སྒྲུ་ཚམ་ཡང་མ་བསྐྱལ་ཞིང་། ཞེན་པ་དང་འདོད་པ་ཀུན་དང་བྲལ་བའི་འོད་གསལ་བ་དེ་ཉིད་ཁོང་དུ་ཆུད་ཅིང་རྟོགས་ནས། ལོངས་བ་དང་སྐུ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པའི་ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་མཉམ་པ་ཉིད་དུ་མ་ར་གཅིག་པར་འགྱུར་ཞིང་རང་གི་ཡིད་ལ་བྱུང་བའི་རྟོགས་པའི་ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ནི། མཉམ་པ་ཉིད་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ སྐུའི་སྒོགས་སུ་འགྱུར་བ་མ་གཏོགས་པ་གཞོད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་བ་ཡིན་ཏེ།

By not mastering [fully] the true reality of the absolute truth of the discourses [of the Buddha], of its treatises, of the new and old mantra [traditions], of mahāyāna and hīnayāna, and so forth, and by being attached to [one's partial understanding of] true reality, one furthers only the cause of saṃsāra and does not further the realization of mahāmudrā. Thus it is said in the great king of tantras, the *Guhyagarbha*:[117]

> [There are those, who] do not realize, misunderstand,
> realize partly, or not [entirely] realize the true nature,
> [and who] have the discipline [of the lower tantras], have the intention [of the yoga tantras], have the secrets [of the father, mother, and non-dual tantras], and [who] have doubts concerning this absolute truth.

The intention [of this section] is similar to the meaning of this quotation. Furthermore, clinging to all these tenets and not realizing them, one is confused, and except for [sowing] the seeds of the six types [of births], one does not further even slightly the realization of mahāmudrā. Therefore, if one is not attached and does not cling to all these tenets, one realizes mahāmudrā, and one realizes and masters the true reality of all phenomena.

> 43 The guarded vows and commitments [of the sphere] of thought are a degeneration from the true state.
> 44 One remains mentally inactive and free from all wishes,
> 45 like the self-arising and self-subsiding ripples in the water.
> 46 If you don't dwell anywhere, don't focus on anything, and don't digress from [true] reality,
> 47 you don't transgress your commitments, and you are a light in the darkness.

Even though worldly people say that according to [views referred to] above, one attains [the realization] only based on the gathering of the accumulation of merit and thereby actualizes Buddhahood, the essential point is mental inactivity. Through virtue, one does not further [the realization of mahāmudrā] the slightest bit, and through evil, one does not inflict the slightest bit of harm on it. And if one masters and realizes the clear light that is free from all attachment and wishes, the many [experiences of] the sameness of all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa become of a single taste. All swarms of thoughts[118] arising from one's mind are only furthering [that] sameness, [i.e.] *dharmakāya*, [but] do not harm [it].

117 *Guhyagarbhatantra*, 13.1, lines 2 and 3 reverse, line 4 unidentified (see Dorje 1987, 231).
118 Read: *rtog*.

དེ་ཡང་རང་གི་སེམས་ལ་རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ་གང་བྱུང་ཡང་། དཔེར་ན་མཚོ་ཆེན་པོ་རླུང་གིས་བསྐྱོད་ན་པ་ཏ་དག་འབྱུང་ཞིང་ཡལ་བའི་དཔེ་དང་མཚུངས་པ་བཞིན་བྱ་སེམས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ་ཡང་གཅིག་གི་རྗེར་ལ་གཅིག་འབྱུང་ཞིང་། ཕྱི་མ་སྐྱེ་ཞིང་སྔ་མ་འགག་ཀྱང་། རྒ་བ་རང་གི་སེམས་མ་གཏོགས་པ། །གཞན་གང་ཡང་མ་ཡིན་པའི་ཕྱིར་ན། དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ངང་ལས་མ་གཡོས་པ་མི་དམིགས་པར་མཉམ་པར་བཞག་ཅིང་། དོན་དེ་ཉིད་ལས་མ་འདས་ན། ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་སྒོ་ནས་དོན་དམ་པ་ཉིད་ཁོང་དུ་ཆུད་པར་འགྱུར་ཞིང་ཤེས་ན་སྐུན་པ་ལ་སྒོ་ནས་མེ་བཏེགས་པ་བཞིན་དུ་འགྱུར་རོ། །

ཞེ་འདོད་ཀུན་བཟལ་མཐའ་ལ་མི་གནས་ན། །
སྟེ་སྟོང་ཆོས་རྣམས་མ་ཡུས་མཐོང་བར་འགྱུར། །

ཱུ་ འཁོར་བ་དང་མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ་དང་། ལྷ་དང་བླ་མ་ལ་སོགས་པ་གང་ལ་ཡང་ཆགས་པ་དང་ཞེན་པའི་སེམས་ཀུན་དང་བཟལ་ཞིང་མཐའ་རྣམ་པ་གཉིས་ལ་མ་གནས་ན། སྟེ་སྟོང་ཀྱི་ཆེས་མ་ཡུས་པ་མཐོང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ། །

དོན་འདིར་གཞོལ་ན་འཁོར་བའི་བཙོན་ལས་ཐར། །
དོན་འདིར་མཉམ་བཞག་སྟོག་སྤྲིབ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྤོག །
བསྟན་པའི་སྒོར་ཞེས་སུ་བཤད་པ་ཡིན། །

དོན་འདིར་མི་མོས་སྐྱེ་བོ་ཟུན་པོ་རྣམས། །
འཁོར་བའི་ཆུ་བོས་རྐྱ་ཁུ་ཁྱེར་བར་ཟད། །
ངན་སོང་སྣུག་བསྔལ་མི་བཟད་ཟུན་པོ་སྤྱིང་རེ་རྗེ། །

སྡུག་བསྔལ་མི་བཟད་ཐར་འདོད་བློ་མ་མཁས་ལ་བསྟེན། །
ཏིག་ཟྲའས་སྤྱིང་ལ་ཞུགས་ན་རང་སེམས་གོལ་བར་འགྱུར། །

Furthermore, whatever thought arises in one's mind, these thoughts of the mind, too, arise one after the other. That is just as in the example of the arising and disappearing waves [that occur] if the wind moves the ocean. Moreover, even though [it seems that] the later [thought] arises and the earlier one ceases, [in truth] the root is nothing but one's mind because [thoughts] are nothing other [than the mind]. If one rests in meditative balance in that state, not wavering and not focusing [on anything], and does not go beyond just that true state, [being] the light of all dharmas, one masters the absolute truth, just as, for example, one raises a light in the darkness.

2.2.5. Benefit

> 48 If you are free from all wishes and do not dwell in the [two] extremes,
> 49 you will recognize the Dharmas [of all] collections [of scripture] without exception.

If one is free from all attachments and wishes concerning saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, deity, guru, and so forth and does not remain in the two extremes, one will see the dharmas of all baskets without exception.

> 50 If you apply yourself diligently to this true state, you will become free from the prison of saṃsāra.
> 51 [If you] rest in meditative balance in this true state, all evil and all veils will be burned.
> 52 [This] has been taught to be the lamp of the teachings.

2.2.6. Defects

> 53 Foolish people who are not inclined toward this true state
> 54 are only being constantly swept away by the stream of saṃsāra.
> 55 Oh, fools! What a pity! The sufferings of the lower realms are unbearable!

2.2.7. Training

2.2.7.1. Preparations

2.2.7.1.1. Relying on the guru and developing renunciation

> 56 Those who wish to become free from never-ending suffering[119] should follow a skilled guru.
> 57 When his blessing has entered your heart, your mind will become free.

119 The Karmapa's reading is uncertain here. *mDzod* om. *sdug bsngal*, I follow *rGya* and *Zhwa*.

꠸ སེམས་ཀྱི་གནས་ལུགས་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་དོན་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་མོས་ཤིང་ཉམས་སུ་བླངས་ན་འཁོར་བའི་སྡུག་བསྔལ་གྱི་རྒྱུ་མཚོ་ལས་ཐར་ཞིང་སྙིག་སྒྲིབ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱང་སྤེག་པར་བྱེད་པས་ན་བསྟན་པའི་སྒོན་མེ་ཞེས་བྱ་བར་ཡང་བཤད་པ་ཡིན་ཞིང་ཀུ་ཆུ་ཆེན་པོའི་དོན་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་མི་མོས་པའི་བློན་པོ་རྣམས་ནི་འཁོར་བའི་ཆུ་བོ་ཆེན་པོ་ལས་རྟག་ཏུ་མི་ཐར་ཞིང་དན་སོང་གི་གནས་ན་སྡུག་བསྔལ་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་ཁྱབ་པ་ཉམས་སུ་མྱོང་བར་འགྱུར་ཞིང་སྙིང་རྗེ་བའི་གནས་དང་ལྡན་པ་ཡིན་པས་ན།འགྲོ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་དེ་དག་ལས་ཐོན་པར་བྱ་བའི་ཆེད་དུ། མི་ལུས་ཐོབ་པའི་དུས་སུ།བླ་མ་མཁས་པ་བྱིན་རླབས་དང་ལྡན་པ་ལ་བསྟེན་ཞིང་། དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་བྱིན་རླབས་རང་ཉིད་ལ་ཞུགས་ན་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་དོན་དེ་ཉིད་རྟོགས་པར་འགྱུར་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་དོན་ནོ། ।

ཀུ་ཉོ་འཁོར་བའི་ཆོས་འདི་དོན་མེད་སྡུག་བསྔལ་རྒྱུ། ।
བྱས་པའི་ཆོས་ལ་སྙིང་པོ་མེད་པས་དོན་ལྡན་སྙིང་པོ་ལྟོས། ।
གཟུང་འཛིན་ཀུན་ལས་འདས་ན་ལྟ་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡིན། ।
ཡེངས་པ་མེད་ན་བསྒོམ་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡིན། ।
བྱ་བཅལ་མེད་ན་སྤྱོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡིན། ।
རེ་དོགས་མེད་ན་འབྲས་བུ་མངོན་དུ་འགྱུར། ।

꠸ རེ་དོགས་མེད་ན་འབྲས་བུ་མངོན་དུ་གྱུར་ཞེས་པའི་བར་གྱིས་འཁོར་བའི་ཆོས་ཅན་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ནི། བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཚོགས་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་འདུས་བྱས་ཀྱི་དགེ་བའི་རྩ་བ་རྣམས་ལ་ཟེར་བ་ཡིན་ཏེ། དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་དོན་གསལ་བ་སྟོང་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཅན་དེ་ཉིད་མི་རྟོགས་པ་ཡིན་པས་ན། །དོན་དང་ལྡན་པའི་སྙིང་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་ལྟོས། །ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་དོན་ནོ། །དེ་ལྟ་བུའི་དོན་དེ་ཉིད་ཤེས་སུ་མྱོང་བ་ནི་གཟུང་བ་དང་འཛིན་པའི་ཡུལ་ཀུན་ལས་འདས་པ་དེ་ཉིད་རྟོགས་ན་ནི་ལྟ་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡིན་ཞིང་།དེ་མ་ཡེངས་པར་སྤྱོད་པ་གང་གིས་ཀྱང་མི་གཏོད་ཅིང་།ན་དེ་ཉིད་བསྒོམས་ན་བསྒོམ་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡིན་ཞིང་། དེ་གཉིས་ཀའི་བྱ་བ་དང་རྩོལ་སྤྲུན་ལས་འདས་པ་དེ་ཉིད་ནི་སྤྱོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡིན་ཞིང་། དེ་ནས་ཐམས་ཅད་ ལ་རེ་དོགས་མེད་པ་དེ་ནི་འབྲས་བུ་མངོན་དུ་གྱུར་པའོ། ।

དམིགས་པའི་ཡུལ་འདས་སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་གསལ། ।
བསྒོད་པའི་ལམ་མེད་སངས་རྒྱས་ལམ་སྟ་ཟིན། ।
བསྒོམ་པའི་ཡུལ་མེད་གོམས་ན་བྱ་མེད་བྱང་ཆུབ་འཐོབ། ।

If you are inclined toward this true state of the natural state of the mind, mahāmudrā, and practice, you will become free from the ocean of suffering of transmigration (*saṃsāra*), and you will burn all these evils and veils. Therefore [this] has been taught to be the "light of the teachings." And the foolish ones who are not inclined toward that true state of mahāmudrā will never become free from the great stream of saṃsāra, and they will experience sufferings beyond imagination in the lower realms. And since they are objects of compassion,[120] the meaning is that [you cultivate the wish]: "[Now] that we have obtained a human body, to cause all beings to come out of these [evil places of birth], may we rely on a skilled guru endowed with blessings, and when that blessing of him has entered into us, may we realize the true state of mahāmudrā!"

2.2.7.1.2. Ascertaining the result of view, meditation, and conduct

> 58 Oh! These saṃsāric phenomena are meaningless; they are the cause of suffering.
> 59 Since created phenomena are without essence, look at the essence that is meaningful!
> 60 To be beyond all duality is the king of the views.
> 61 When you are without distraction, that is the king of meditative practice.
> 62 When you [practice] effortlessly, that is the king of conduct.
> 63 You have achieved the result when you are free from hope and apprehension.

That which is "subjected to saṃsāra" is called "produced roots of virtue that are dependent on the accumulation of merit." Through that [kind of phenomena], the true state of mahāmudrā – that which is endowed with the characteristics of being clear and empty – is not realized. Therefore it was said: "Look at that essence that possesses meaning!" Experiencing that true state is to be beyond all objects of duality. If that is realized, it is the king of views; by any undistracted implementation of this [view], there can be no harm, and if that true state is practiced, it is the great king of meditation; the being beyond activities and efforts in the context of these two is the great king of conduct; and to be free from hope and apprehension with regard to these [three] is to actualize the result. <44>

> 64 [Being] beyond the objects of mental fixation, one obtains the clarity of the nature of the mind.
> 65 [That is] the path entrance to Buddhahood – [a path that is] not a path [to be] traversed.
> 66 If you familiarize to that lack of an object of meditation, that is supreme awakening.

120 *snying rje ba'i gnas dang ldan pa yin* is suspicious. Such a construction is nowhere else attested. It could be a slip of the eye (see the *dang ldang pa* appearing correctly in the next line!).

༥ དམིགས་པའི་ཡུལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ནི། ལྟ་བསྒོམ་པ་དང་སྤྱོད་བགྲང་པ་ལ་སོགས་པ་དམིགས་པའི་ཡུལ་དེ་དག་ཐམས་ལས་འདས་ན། སེམས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་དམིགས་པ་མེད་པ་དེ་ཉིད་དོན་ སགས་ལ་བས་བགྲོད་པའི་ལམ་ཐེག་ཆེན་བསྒོམ་དུ་མེད་པས་ཡུལ་མེད་པ་དེ་ཉིད་གོམས་ན་བྱ་ན་མེད་པའི་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཅས་བྱ་བ་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། །

ཀྱེ་མ་འཇིག་རྟེན་ཚོས་ལ་ལེགས་རྟོགས་དང་། །
རྟག་མི་ཐུབ་སྟེ་རྨི་ལམ་སྐྱུ་མ་འདྲ། །
རྨི་ལམ་སྐྱུ་མ་དོན་ལ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། །
དེས་ན་སྐྱོ་བ་སྐྱེད་ལ་འཇིག་རྟེན་བྱ་བ་ཐོངས། །
འཁོར་ཡུལ་ཚགས་སྦང་འཕེལ་པ་ཀུན་གཅོད་ནས། །
གཅིག་པུར་ནགས་འདབས་རི་ཁྲོད་གནས་པར་བསྒོམ། །
བསྒོམ་དུ་མེད་པའི་ངང་ལ་གནས་པར་གྱིས། །
ཐོབ་མེད་ཐོབ་ན་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་འཐོབ། །
དཔེར་ན་ལྕོན་ཤིང་སྟོང་པོ་ཡལ་གა་ལོ་འདབ་རྒྱས། །
ཇ་བ་གཅིག་བཅད་ཡལ་གა་ཁྱི་འབྱམ་སྐམ། །
དེ་བཞིན་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཇ་བ་བཅད་ན་འཁོར་བའི་ལོ་འདབ་སྐམ། །

༦ འཇིག་རྟེན་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ནི་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་ཁྱབ་ན་ཡང་། འདི་ནི་འཁོར་བའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་བྱ་བ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ། ཡང་འཇིག་རྟེན་པའི་ཚོས་འདི་ཟམས་ཐམས་ཅད་བརྟག་མི་ཐུབ་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ། སྐྱུ་མའི་དཔེ་བརྒྱད་དང་འབྲུ་བ་ལྟ་བུར་སྟང་ཡང་།རྨི་ལམ་ལ་སོགས་པ་སྐྱུ་མའི་དཔེ་ཟམས་ཀྱང་དོན་དོ་བོ་ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་ལ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་པས། དེའི་ཕྱིར་ན། འཁོར་བའི་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་སྐྱོ་བ་ཆེན་པོ་བསྐྱེད་ལ། འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་བྱ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་། འཁོར་དང་ཡུལ་དང་། ཚགས་པ་དང་སྦང་བ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་སེམས་སྤངས་ལ་གཅིག་པུར་ནགས་ཀྱི་འདབ་ལ་སོགས་པ་དང་།རི་ཁྲོད་དགོན་པ་ཤིན་ཏུ་དབེན་ཞིང་ཉམས་དགའ་བར་དེ་ལྟ་བུར་བསྒོམ་ཞིང་། བསྒོམ་དུ་མེད་པའི་ངང་ལས་མ་གཡོས་པར་བྱས་ན་འཁོར་བ་དང་མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པའི་རྟོག་པ་དང་། གཟུང་བ་དང་འཛིན་པའི་ཡུལ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྤངས་ན། ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོའི་དོན་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར་བ་ཡིན་ཏེ།

"Object of mental fixation" includes all objects of mental fixation, such as practicing deities and counting mantras and so on. When one has left all this behind, that is precisely the meaning of "the nature of mind that is without mental fixation," which is "clarity." Through this, one takes hold of the path called "attainment of Buddhahood," which is, however, without any "path to traverse" such as that of the Hīnayāna and where there is "nothing to practice." When one has become accustomed to this very absence of objects, one will attain "supreme awakening."

2.2.7.1.3. How to abandon distractions and train in solitude

> 67 Oh! Recognize well the phenomena of this world!
> 68 They cannot last and are like an illusion in a dream.
> 69 Illusions in a dream do not exist in reality.
> 70 Produce, therefore, repulsion and abandon worldly activities!
> 71 Cut off all connections through attachment and aversion to your retinue and homeland
> 72 and practice alone in the solitude of the outskirts of a forest [or] a mountain retreat!
> 73 Dwell in a state of nonpractice!
> 74 If you have obtained the unobtainable, you obtain mahāmudrā.
> 75 A tree, for example, grows a trunk, branches, and leaves.
> 76 Cutting a single root, a million branches will wither.
> 77 Similarly, if you cut off the root of the mind, the leaves of saṃsāra will wither.

Even though what is called "world" is beyond imagination, [here] this must be understood as "world of samsāra." It is so with these that all these "phenomena of the world" have no continuity. Although they appear [to the mind as] similar to the eight examples of illusion, however, these examples of illusion, such as "dream," do not exist in essential reality (Skt. *dharmadhātu*), that is, the sphere of true reality. Therefore, if one has produced great weariness towards the phenomena of saṃsāra, abandoned all worldly activities, retinue, and homeland, and the thoughts of desire and hatred, and so forth, and has practiced accordingly alone in the solitary and joyous solitude of the outskirts of a forest and mountain retreats, and has done so without being distracted from the state where nothing is to be meditated, then, abandoning the thoughts of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and all objects of duality, one will obtain the true state of mahāmudrā, which is the essence, namely the *dharmadhātu*.

དེ་ཡང་དཔེར་ན་ལྷོན་ཤིང་སྡོང་པོ་ཡལ་གा་དང་། ལོ་མ་དང་། འདབ་མ་དང་། མེ་ཏོག་དང་།འཕྲས་བུ་ལྡན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་གཅིག་གི་རྩ་བ་བཅད་པར་འགྱུར་ན།ཡལ་གा་ཁྲི་དང་འབྲུམ་ལ་སོགས་པ་སྐམ་པར་འགྱུར་བ་ཡིན་པས་ན། དཔེ་དེ་བཞིན་དུ་སེམས་ཀྱི་རྩ་བ་བཅད་ན། འཁོར་བ་དང་མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ་དང་རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པའི་ཚོགས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ལོ་འདབ་སྐམ་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། །

དཔེར་ན་སྐལ་སྡོང་བསགས་པའི་མུན་པ་ཡང་། །
སྒྲོན་མེ་གཅིག་གིས་མུན་པའི་ཚོགས་རྣམས་སེལ། །
དེ་བཞིན་རང་སེམས་འོད་གསལ་སྐད་ཅིག་གིས། །
བསྐལ་པར་བསགས་པའི་མ་རིག་སྤྲིག་སྒྲིབ་སེལ། །

ཅ། དཔེ་ནི་མུན་པ་ཤིན་ཏུ་གནག་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཅན་དེ་ཉིད། །བསྐལ་པ་སྡོང་དུ་བསགས་པར་ཐུར་ནའང་སྒྲོན་མེ་གཅིག་གིས་མུན་པའི་ཚོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་བསལ་བ་བཞིན་དུ། ཚེ་འཁོར་བ་ཐོག་མ་མེད་པ་ནས་ཐ་མ་ད་ལྟ་ལ་ཐུག་གི་བར་དུ། སྤྲིག་པ་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་ཁྱབ་པ་བྱས་ཀྱང་།རང་གི་སེམས་ལ་ཤར་བའི་འོད་གསལ་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་སྐད་ཅིག་གིས། བསྐལ་པར་བསགས་པའི་སྤྲིག་པ་དང་སྒྲིབ་པའི་ཚོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་སེལ་བའོ། །

ཀྱེ་ཧོ། །ཁྱོ་ཡི་ཚོས་ཀྱིས་བློ་འདས་དོན་མི་མཐོང་། །
བྱས་པའི་ཚོས་ཀྱིས་བྱར་མེད་དོན་མི་རྟོགས། །
བློ་འདས་བྱར་མེད་དོན་དེ་ཐོབ་འདོད་ན། །
རང་སེམས་རྫད་ཚོད་རིག་པ་གཅེར་བུར་ཞོག །
རྟོག་པ་དྲི་མའི་ཚུ་དེ་དྭངས་སུ་ཆུག །
སྣང་བ་དག་སྒྲུབ་མི་བྱ་རང་ཤར་ཞོག །
སྤང་ལེན་མེད་པར་སྣང་སྲིད་ཕྱག་རྒྱར་གྲོལ། །
ཀུན་གཞི་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པར་བག་ཆགས་སྤྲིག་སྒྲིབ་སྤོང་། །
སྣམ་བྱེད་རྩིས་གདབ་མི་བྱ་སྐྱེ་མེད་སྙིང་པོར་ཞོག །

In that regard, if, for example, the root of a large tree with a trunk, stems, twigs, leaves, blossoms, and fruits <45> is cut off, a million branches and so forth, will wither. Therefore, as in that example, if the root of the mind is cut off, the foliage of saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, and of the swarms of thoughts will wither.

2.2.7.1.4. Showing the qualities of such training

78 For example, the darkness accumulated in a thousand eons, too,
79 is [such that] a single lamp removes that accumulation of darkness.
80 Similarly, through a single moment of the clear light of one's mind
81 all evil deeds and veils accumulated through eons are removed.

Concerning that example, even though such [darkness] with the characteristic of being extremely dark has been accumulated for eons, all accumulations of darkness are cleared away by a single lamp. Similarly, even though until the present day, you may have committed inconceivable evil since beginningless time in saṃsāra, still all the evil and veils accumulated during eons are cleared away by a single moment of clear light—mahāmudrā—arising in one's mind.

2.2.7.2. Actual training

2.2.7.2.1. How a person of the highest capacity trains

82 Oh! With intellectual teachings (*blo yi chos*), you cannot see the true state, which is beyond the intellect.
83 Through fabricated teachings, you will not realize the true state where nothing must be done.
84 If you wish to obtain the true state beyond the intellect, where nothing must be done,
85 cut the root of your mind and rest in naked awareness!
86 Let the thoughts, which are a stream of stains, clear up!
87 Neither interrupt nor establish appearances; rest in the natural state!
88 [Dwelling] without rejecting or accepting, all that exists becomes released in [mahā]mudrā.
89 The habitual pattern of evil and of the veils are abandoned in the unborn basic consciousness.[121]
90 Do not think[122] or evaluate! Rest in the unborn essence!

121 This translation follows *mDzod*, which has the closest resemblance with the Karmapa's text as much as it is visible to us. Cf. the commentary of Sangs rgyas mnyan pa, *Phyag chen ganggā ma'i 'grel pa*, in *Chos tshan sna tshogs*, Kathmandu: Karma Leksheyling, 2012, bdr:IE3JT13346: *bag chags kyi sdig sgrib de rnams rang bzhin gyis zad 'gro gi red*.

122 Here I follow *rGya*, which makes the most sense. *mDzod* has *snyem brtsis* (*Zhwa*: *snyems*), which makes less sense and may be a simple mistake, and the canonical versions read *mnyam rjes*, for which I see no reason at all. *rGya* is followed by one of the aural transmissions (*mKha'*), while, surprisingly, the other one (*bDe*) follows the canonical versions.

སྣང་བ་རང་སྣང་བློ་ཡི་ཚོས་ཆམས་ཟད་དུ་ཚུག །
སྐུ་མཐའ་ཡོངས་གྲོལ་ལྟ་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་མཆོག །
སྐུ་མེད་གཏིང་ཡངས་སྐོམ་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་མཆོག །མཐའ་ཚོད་ཕྱོགས་བལ་སྤྲོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་མཆོག །
རེ་མེད་རང་གྲོལ་འབྲས་བུའི་མཆོག་ཡིན་ནོ། །

༥ བློ་ཡི་ཚོས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ནི།ཐེག་པ་ཆུང་དུའི་ཚོས་ཆམས་ལ་ཟེར་བ་ཡིན་ཏེ། དེ་ཡང་བྱས་པའི་ཚོས་ཡིན་པས་ན།བྱར་མེད་པའི་དོན་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་དེ་ཉིད་མི་རྟོགས་པས་ན།བློ་ལས་འདས་པ་བྱ་རྟ་མེད་པ་དེ་ཉིད་ཐོབ་པར་འདོད་ན།རང་གི་སེམས་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ངང་ལས་མ་གཡོས་ན། རྟོག་པའི་ཚོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་འགགས་ནས།བློ་ཞི་ཐམས་ཅད་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུག་རྒྱར་རྟོགས་ཤིང་། ཀུན་ཀྱི་གཞི་སེམས་ཉིད་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པ་སྟོང་དུ་འཛུར་ཞིང་རང་གི་སྣང་བ་ལས་བྱུང་བའི་བློའི་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཕུག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོར་རྟོགས་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ། སྐུ་མཐའ་མེད་པ་དེ་ཉིད་ཟམས་སུ་མྱོང་ན་ལྟ་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡིན་ཏེ།སྐུ་མེད་ཅིང་མ་ཡེངས་པ་ནི་བསྒོམ་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡིན་ནོ། །མཐའ་དང་བལ་ཞིང་དགག་སྒྲུབ་མེད་པ་ནི་སྤྱོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡིན་ནོ། །རེ་བ་དོགས་པ་མེད་པར་ཐམས་ཅད་སྟོང་དུ་ཐྱར་པ་ནི་འབྲས་བུའི་མཆོག་ཡིན་ནོ། །ཡང་།

ལས་ནི་དང་པོ་གཅོང་རོང་ཆུ་དང་འདྲ། །
བར་དུ་ཆུ་བོ་གཟུ་དལ་ཞིང་གཡོ། །
ཐ་མ་ཆུ་རྣམས་མ་བྱུ་འཕྲད་པ་འདྲ། །

བློ་དམན་སྐྱེས་བུའི་ངང་ལ་མི་གནས་ན། །
རྒྱུད་གི་གནད་བརྟུང་རིག་པ་བསྒྲུབ་ལ་བོར། །
ལྟ་སྤྱངས་སེམས་འཛིན་ཡན་ལག་དུ་མ་ཡིས། །
རིག་པ་ངང་ལ་མི་གནས་བར་དུ་གསུན། །

91 Appearances are [your] own appearance (*rang snang*); the mind's phenomena (*blo yi chos*[123])—let them too exhaust themselves!
92 Being completely boundless is the supreme king of the view.
93 Boundless, deep, and vast is the supreme king of the practice.
94 Being resolute and unbiased is the supreme king of conduct.
95 The supreme fruit is free from hopes and self-liberating.

The intellectual teachings are said to be teachings of the hīnayāna. Furthermore, since these are fabricated teachings, the true state where nothing must be done, [i.e.] mahāmudrā, is not realized [through them]. Therefore, if you wish to obtain what is beyond intellect—the true state where nothing must be done—then, as long as you remain in the state that is the nature of your mind, all the swarms of thoughts break off, and thus you will realize all the supreme [states free from thoughts] as the *dharmamudrā*. Moreover, you will master the basis of all, the unborn nature of the mind. Moreover, all mental phenomena (*blo'i chos*) that arise from own-appearances (*rang gi snang ba*) are realized as mahāmudrā.[124] If you experience just that boundlessness, that is the king of the view. Boundlessness and not being distracted is the king of the practice. Freedom from boundaries and [remaining] without [either] stopping [or] accomplishing [anything] is the king of the conduct. Being free from hope and apprehension, <46> everything is mastered; that is the supreme fruit.

2.2.7.2.2. Illustrating the three types of persons through examples

96 [The mind of a] beginner is like a waterfall.
97 In the middle [it is like] the Ganges river, smoothly flowing.
98 In the end, it is like [the ocean] where the rivers meet like mother and son.[125]

2.2.7.2.3a. How a person of medium [and lower[126]] capacity trains

99 If those of lesser intelligence [can]not remain in [that] state,
100 [they should] concentrate on the vital points of wind and leave awareness as it is.
101 Tame [your mind] through the many limbs of gazing and concentration
102 until it rests in the state of awareness.

123 My understanding of this occurence of *blo yi chos* as different from its occurence in line 82 is confirmed through the commentary.
124 I assume that this is to be understood in the context of the *cittamātra* teaching that all phenomena are one's mind. The own-appearances (*rang gi snang ba*) are what one projects due to habitual traces. Mental phenomena (*blo'i chos*) arise from that as one's perceptions of enemies, desirable things, and so forth.
125 We do not know what the Karmapa read here. Several versions (among them rGya, mDzod, Zhwa, mKha'. and bDe) read "… like the rivers, mother and son, meeting." Four versions (Lang, Nampa, Kham, and Urgyan) read "… like the single taste in the ocean." I have translated here similar to how the Karmapa comments: "like the ocean where all rivers merge."
126 Although the practice of medium and lower types of persons have a single point in the outline, the following nine lines can be devided into four lines for the person of medium capacity and five for the lower. The practice of a person with lower capacity is explained below.

ལས་དང་པོ་པ་ནི། ཐེག་པ་ཆུང་ངུ་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་འཛིགས་དགོས་ཤིང་།།ལས་དང་པོ་གཅོང་རོང་གི་ཆུ་དང་འདྲ་ཞིང་།ཚོགས་བསགས་པས་དགེ་བར་ལྟ་ཞིང་ཁནྡོད་པ་དང་ལོག་པའི་སེམས་སྐྱེས་ན་སྤྲིག་པར་ལྟ་བ་སྟེ།དེ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་འཛིན་པ་བྱོལ་ནས་གསང་སྔགས་ཀྱི་ལམ་ལ་ཞུགས་པའི་དུས་སུ། དེའེར་ན་ཆུ་བོ་ཆེན་པོ་གརྒྱ་ལ་སོགས་པ་དང་། ཆུ་བོ་ཆེན་པོ་རྣམས་དལ་ཞིང་གཡོ་བ་བཞིན་དུ་ཆེགས་ཆུང་ངུས་དགེ་བ་དང་སྤྲིག་པ་གང་གིས་ཀྱང་ཕན་མ་བཏགས་གནོད་པ་མི་བསྐྱེལ་བའོ།།དེ་ནས་དེ་ལྟ་བུ་གུན་མི་དམིགས་པའི་སྟོང་ངུ་ཐུར་བ་ནི།།ཆུ་ཐམས་ཅད་འདྲེས་པའི་ཆུ་མཚོ་དང་འདྲ་བའོ། །བྱོ་དམན་པའི་སྐྱེས་བུ་འགའ་ཞིག་གིས་དེ་ལྟ་བུའི་དོན་མ་རྟོགས་ཀྱང་།སྟུང་གི་གནད་བཟུང་ཞིང་བསྒོམ་པའི་ཐབས་ངུ་མ་ཡིས། ཕྱག་ཆུ་ཆེན་པོའི་དོན་མ་རྟོགས་ཀྱི་བར་དུ། རིག་པ་གནད་ངུ་གཅུན་ཞིང་རྟོགས་པའི་དུས་སུ་ཕྱག་ཆུ་བཞི་ལ་གནས་ཤིང་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་དགོས་པའོ། །

ལས་ཆུ་བསྟེན་ན་བདེ་སྟོང་ཡེ་ཤེས་འཆར། །
ཐབས་དང་ཤེས་རབ་ཟུང་རྒྱབས་སྟོམས་པར་འཇུག །
དལ་བར་དབབ་ཅིང་བསྒྱིལ་བཟློག་དྲངས་པ་དང་། །
གནས་སུ་བསྐྱལ་དང་ཡུས་ལ་ཁྱབ་པར་བྱ། །
དེ་ལ་ཚགས་ཞེན་མེད་ན་བདེ་སྟོང་ཡེ་ཤེས་འཆར། །

མན་ངག་འདི་བྱོལ་ལམ་གྱི་དབང་དུ་བྱས་ནས་འདིར་ཞིབ་ཏུ་མ་སྨོས་སོ། །

ཚེ་རིང་སྐུ་དཀར་མེད་ཅིང་ཟླ་ཤར་ཆུས་པར་འགྱུར། །
བཀག་མདངས་གསལ་ལ་སྟོབས་ཀྱང་སེང་གེ་འདྲ། །
ཐུན་མོང་དངོས་གྲུབ་མྱུར་ཐོབ་མཚོག་ལ་གཞོལ་བར་འགྱུར། །

ཥཱི ཡོན་ཏན་རྒྱ། །

ཕྱག་ཆུ་ཆེན་པོ་གནད་ཀྱི་མན་ངག་འདི། །
འཕྲོ་བ་སྐལ་ལྡན་སྙིང་ལ་གནས་པར་ཤོག །

The beginner must ascend[127] gradually from the hīnayāna. [The mind of a] beginner is like a waterfall. He views the accumulation of merit as virtuous,[128] and if a harmful and inappropriate mind arises, he views it as evil. When he, having released the grasping of these [concepts], enters the path of mantra, there is by small efforts in any virtue and evil neither help rendered nor harm inflicted, like, for example, the smooth flowing of vast rivers such as the Ganges. Then, in that way, the mastering of nonfocussing is like the ocean where all rivers merge.
Some people of lesser intelligence do not understand the true state. Yet through concentrating on the vital points of wind and many [other] methods of practice [they should] apply the key points of awareness until they have realized the meaning of mahāmudrā and when they realize, they must remain in the four seals (*mudrās*) and practice them.

2.2.7.2.3b. How a person of [medium and] lower capacity trains

103 If you rely on a *karmamudrā*, the gnosis of bliss and emptiness arises,
104 and you enter into the union [through] the blessing of skillful means and discriminating knowledge.
105 You should bring [the *bindu*/bliss] gently down, retain it, reverse it, draw it [up],
106 and deliver it to [particular] places and pervade your body with it.
107 If in that there is no clinging, the gnosis of bliss and emptiness arises.

Since the present pith instructions [of the entire text] have to do with the path of liberation, I will not go into the details [of the path of desire] here.

2.2.7.3. The result of the training

108 Your life will be long, without the signs of old age,[129] and it[s span] will increase like the [waxing] moon.
109 Your complexion will be radiant, and your strength, too, like a lion's.
110 You will quickly obtain the ordinary siddhis and have diligence for the supreme ones.

These are the qualities.

3. The meaning of the concluding part

111 May this instruction of the vital points of mahāmudrā
112 remain in the hearts of the fortunate ones!

127 Read: *'dzegs. Rheingans and Schott have corrected this in their forthcoming edition to 'jugs, although three of their four editions have 'dzigs (mDzod, and the two editions of the Karmapa's collected works from Lhasa, 2013, p. 414, and from Zi ling, 2006, p. 174. I have no access to their 4th* edition from Dhagpo Kagyü Ling). It is not clear to me how *'jugs* would relate to the preceding particle *nas*. My reading *'dzegs* has been explained in the introduction.
128 *pas*] *pa*.
129 Literally: "without white hair."

སྨོན་ལམ་མོ།།

ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་གྱུབ་པའི་དཔལ་ཏི་ལོ་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཞལ་སྔ་ནས་མཛད་པ་ཁ་ཆེའི་པཎྜི་ཏ་མཁས་ལ་གྱུབ་པའི་ནུ་རོ་པས་དཀའ་བ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ ་མཛད་པའི་རྗེང་ལ་ཆུ་བོ་གངྒཱའི་འགྲམ་དུ་ཏི་ལོ་པས་གསུངས་པ་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་རྗེའི་ཚོག་ཤད་ཉི་ཤུ་རྩ་དགུ་པ་རྣོགས་སོ།། །།ནུ་རོ་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཞལ་སྔ་ནས་དང་། །བོད་ཀྱི་ལོ་ཙྪ་བ་ཆེན་པོ་སྒྲ་བསྒྱུར་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་མར་པ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བློ་གྲོས་ཀྱིས། །བྱང་ཕྱོགས་ཀ་རིར་བསྒྱུར་ཅིང་ཞུས་ཏེ་གཏན་ལ་ཕབ་པ་རྣོགས་སོ།། །།

མཇུག་གི་དོན་ཡིན།

ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་གཉུག་མའི་དོན་ཇུང་ཞིག་གསལ་བར་ཕྱེ་བ་རྣོགས་སོ། །ལུག་ལོ་ཟླ་བ་བརྒྱད་པ་ལ་མཚུར་ཕུའི་བཀྲ་ཤིས་གསལ་མར་རང་བྱུང་རྡོ་རྗེས་མཛད་པའོ། །བཀྲ་ཤིས་དཔལ་འབར་འཛམ་གླིང་རྒྱན་དུ་ཞོག །ཀྱེ་ཧྲཱ་སྦྱ་སཏ་ང་གཱ་ཏྱཱ།

This is the aspiration prayer.

[Colophon of the basic text as found in the *gDams ngag mdzod*]: The twenty-nine mahāmudrā vajra verses[130] spoken by the glorious great Tilopa, who has mastered mahāmudrā, which were taught by him at the banks of the river Ganges to Nāropa, the Kashmirian Paṇḍita, who is learned and accomplished, after he had accomplished the twelve ordeals, are complete. They were translated and edited by the great Nāropa and the great Tibetan Lotsāva, the king of translators, Marpa Chökyi Lodrö, in Phullahari in the North.

This is the meaning of the concluding part.

[Colophon of the commentary]: The bit of the clarifying analysis of the meaning of the Ganges-Mahāmudrā is now complete. It was composed in the eighth month of the sheep year[131] in the Tashi Tsalma of Tsurpu by Rangjung Dorje (Karma-pa III, 1284-1339).

May it be a fortunate, glorious ornament of the world.

130 This statement remains somewhat ambiguous, because Tib. *tshig rkang* actually means "line of verse," and we have 112 of them here. If we were to divide these 112 lines into 29 verses, we would get less than four lines per verse.

131 That means either in 1307, 1319, or 1331.

Tibetan Works: Abbreviations

mKha'–*mKha' 'gro snyan brgyud kyi yig rnying*: Oral transmission of the Rechung sNyan brgyud, compiled by Drukchen Pema Karpo (1527–1592). Manuscript copied from an earlier manuscript belonging to the Dechen Chokhor Chogon by the Bhutanese monk Monlam Rabsang. Kargyud sungrab nyamso khang, Darjeeling, W. B., 1982, pp. 9–19. [handwritten dBu can]

rGya—*Phyag chen rgya gzhung [Collection of Indian Mahāmudrā Texts]*: The collected texts of the mahamudra practice translated from Sanskrit, representing the tradition which has passed in the Mar-pa bka'-brgyud-pa. 'Bri gung Thel dBu med manuscripts, Tsondu Senghe, Bir, 1985: pp. 85–90. [handwritten dBu med]

bDe—*bDe mchog snyan brgyud nor bu skor gsum*: Oral transmission of teachings on Chakrasamvara, compiled from ancient materials by Drukchen Pema Karpo (1527–1592). Sungrab nyamso gyunphel parkhang, Palampur, 1975. [handwritten dBu can]

sBa—gSal-snang, *Une chronique ancienne de bSam-yas: sBa-bzed / Éd. du texte tibétain et résumé francais par R. A. Stein*, Institut des hautes études chinoises, Paris, 1961.

mDzod—Karma-pa III, Rang-byung-rdo-rje, *Phyag rgya chen po ganggā ma'i 'grel pa*, *gDams ngag mdzod*, Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, Paro, 1979–1981, vol. 7, pp. 36–37 (*sa bcad*) and 37–47 (*'grel pa*).

Zhwa—Zhwa-dmar-pa V, dKon-mchog-yan-lag,; *Nges don phyag rgya chen po'i khrid mdzod*, rNam par rgyal ba dpal zhwa dmar ba'i chos sde, New Delhi, 1997, vol. 11 [dbu chen]. See also *Phyag rgya chen po ganggā ma'i 'grel pa dngos grub kyi snying khu*, Dzongsar Chhentse Labrang, Gangtok, 1974, TBRC W23927. [handwritten dBu med]

Lang—Langtang Gompa ms, Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) L21/48. [handwritten dBu med]

Nam—Nampa Kunden ms, Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) L109/10. [handwritten dBu med]

Other Tibetan Works

Collected Works of Gampopa—sGam po pa bsod nams rin chen. *gSung 'bum sgam po pa*. sDe dge par khang chen mo 1998. *Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC)*, purl.bdrc.io/resource/W22393. [BDRC bdr:W22393]

Collected Works of Jigten Sumgön—*Jigten Sumgön's Works: Khams gsum chos kyi rgyal po thub dbang ratna shrī'i bka' 'bum nor bu'i bang mdzod*. Collected Works of 'Jig rten gsum mgon. Edited by H. H. Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang (Konchog Tenzin Kunzang Thinley Lhundup). 12 vols. Drikung Kagyu Institute, Dehradun 2001.

Collected Works of Marpa—Mar pa Lo tsā ba Chos kyi blo gros, *dPal mnga' bdag sgra sgyur mar pa lo tsā ba chos kyi blo gros kyi gsung 'bum*, 'Phags yul 'bri gung bka'

brgyud byang chub gling nas 'grems spel zhus. 3 Vols. Drikung Kagyu Institute, Dehra Dun 2009.

Collected Works of Phagmodrupa—Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po. *Dus gsum sangs rgyas thams cad kyi thugs rje'i rnam rol dpal ldan phag gru rdo rje rgyal po mchog gi gsung 'bum rin po che*. Khenpo Shedup Tenzin and Lama Thinley Namgyal (eds.). Shri Gautam Buddha Vihara, Manjushri Bazar, Kathmandu, Nepal 2003.

Karmapa—Karma pa III, Rang byung rdo rje. *gSung 'bum rang byung rdo rje*. [mTshur phu mkhan po lo yag bkra shis], *Sa bcad*, vol. 11, pp. 159–160; *Phyag rgya chen po ganggā ma'i 'grel pa*, 161–176, 2006. *Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC)*, purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW30541. [BDRC bdr:MW30541]

Tsangnyon—Gtsang smyon Heruka Rus pa'i rgyan can, *Complete Biography of Milarepa*. Varanasi 1971.

Yisūn, Zhāng. *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*. 3 vols. Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Beijing 1985.

Zabchö—*Jigten Sumgön's Works: Khams gsum chos kyi rgyal po thub dbang ratna shrī'i nang gi zab chos nor bu'i phreng ba*. Vols. 1–6. rGyal spy'i 'bri gung bka' brgyud spyi khyab lhan khang nas dpar bskrun zhus, 2017.

References

Anālayo, Bikkhu. 2017. "The Luminous Mind in Theravāda and Dharmaguptaka Discourses." *JOCBS* 7 (13): 10–51.

Blumenberg, Hans. (1960) 2010. *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Dalton, Jacob. 2020. "*Mahāmudrā and Samayamudrā* in the Duhuang Documents and Beyond." In *Mahāmudrā in India and Tibet*, edited by Roger R. Jackson and Klaus-Dieter Mathes. Leiden: Brill.

Dorje, Gyurme. 1987. "The Guhyagarbhatantra and its XIVth Century Tibetan Commentary, phyogs bcu mun sel." PhD diss, London: University of London.

Drikung Kyabgön Chetsang Rinpoche. 2011. *Water Chrystal: A Commentary on the Ganges Mahamudra*. Edited by Kay Chandler. Translated by Khenpo K. Tamphel. Dehra Dun: Songtsen Library.

Ducher, Cécile. 2017. *Building a Tradition: The Lives of Mar-pa the Translator*. Collectanea Himalayica 5. München: Indus Verlag.

Esler, Dylan. 2018. "The Lamp for the Eye of Contemplation The bSam-gtan mig-sgron by gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes: Hermeneutical Study with English Translation and Critical Edition of a Tibetan Buddhist Text on Contemplation." PhD diss, Louvain-la-Neuve.

Higgins, David, and Martina Draszczyk. 2016. *Mahāmudrā and the Middle Way: Post-Classical Kagyü Doscourses on Mind, Emptiness and Budha-Nature*. Vol. 1. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien.

Jackson, David P. 1994. *Enlightenment by a Single Means: Tibetan Controversies on the "Self Sufficient White Remedy"(dkar po chig thub)*. Beiträge zur Kultur und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 12. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Jackson, Roger R. 2004. *Tantric Treasures: Three Collections of Mystical Verse from Buddhist India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jong, J. W. de, ed. 1959. *Mi La Ras Pa'i Rnam Thar: Texte Tibétain de La Vie de Milarépa*. Indo-Iranian Monographs 4. 'S-Gravenhage: Mouton.

Karmay, Samten Gyaltsen. 1988. *The Great Perfection*. London: E.J. Brill.

Kemp, Casey. 2015. "Merging Ignorance and Luminosity in Early Bka' brgyud Bsre ba Literature." *Zentral-Asiatische Studien* 44: 35–50.

Lakoff, George. 1986. "The meaning of literal." *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 1: 291–96.

Larsson, Stefan. 2012. *Crazy for Wisdom: The Making of a Mad Yogin in Fifteenth-Century Tibet*. Leiden: Brill.

Mathes, Klaus-Dieter. 2006a. "Blending the Sūtras with the Tantras: The Influence of Maitrīpa and His Circle on the Formation of Sūtra Mahāmudrā in the Kagyu Schools." In *Tibetan Buddhist Literature and Praxis: Studies in its Formative Period, 900–1400*, edited by Ronald M. Davidson and Christian K. Wedemeyer, 201–27. Leiden: Brill.

———. 2006b. "The Collection of 'Indian Mahāmudrā Works' (Tib. Phyag chen rgya gzhung) compiled by the Seventh Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtsho." In *PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, edited by Roger R. Jackson and Matthew T. Kapstein, 89–127. Königswinter.

———. 2015. "Mind and its Co-emergent (sahaja) Nature in Advayavajra´s Commentary on Saraha´s Dohākoṣa." *Zentralasiatische Studien* 44: 17–34.

Meinert, Carmen. 2006. "Legend of *Cig car ba* Criticism in Tibet: a List of *Six Cig car ba* Titles in the *Chos 'byung me tog snying po* of Nyang Nyi ma 'od zer (12th Century)." In *Tibetan Buddhist Literature and Praxis. Studies in its Formative Period 900–1400*, edited by Ronald Davidson and Christian Wedemeyer, 31–54. Leiden: Brill.

———. 2017. "The Conjunction of Chinese Chan and Tibetan rDzogs chen Thought: Reflections on the Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts IOL Tib J 689-1 and PT 699." In *Contributions to the Cultural History of Early Tibet*, edited by Matthew T. Kapstein and Brandon Dotson, 239–301. Leiden / Boston: Brill.

Powers, John. 2009. *A Bull of a Man: Images of Masculinity, Sex, and the Body in Indian Buddhism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rhoton, Jared Douglas. 2002. *A Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes: Essential Distinctions among the Individual Liberation, Great Vehicle, and Tantric Systems by Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltshen*. A Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes: Essential Distinctions among the Individual Liberation, Great Vehicle, and Tantric Systems by Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltshen. New York: State University of New York Press.

Ricœur, Paul. 1978. *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language*. Translated by Robert Czenry, Kathleen McLaughlin, and John Costello. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Schaeffer, Kurtis R. 2005. *Dreaming the Great Brahmin: Tibetan Traditions of the Buddhist Poet-Saint Saraha*. Oxford: University Press.

Schaik, Sam van. 2003. "The Great Perfection and the Chinese Monk: rNyingma-pa Defences of Hwa-shang Mahāyāna in the Eighteenth Century." *Buddhist Studies Review* 20 (2): 189–204.

———. 2004. *Approaching the Great Perfection: Simultaneous and Gradual Methods of Dzogchen Practice in the Longchen Nyingtig*. Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

Schiller, Alexander. 2014. *Die "Vier Yoga"-Stufen der Mahāmudrā-Meditationstradition: Eine Anthologies aus den Gesammelten Schriften des Mönchsgelehrten und Yogin Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po (Kritischer Text und Übersetzung, eingeleitet und erläutert)*. Indian and Tibetan Studies 2. Hamburg: Department of Indian and Tibetan Studies, Universität Hamburg.

Sernesi, Marta. 2011. "The Aural Transmission of Samvara: An Introduction to Neglected Sources for the Study of Early Bka' Brgyud." In *Mahamudra and the Bka' Brgyud Tradition*, 179–209. Andiast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies.

Seyfort Ruegg, David. 1989. *Buddha-Nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective: On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet*. London: School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London.

Sobisch, Jan-Ulrich. Forthcoming. *The Kusāli Yogi: How Vinaya, Mahāmudrā, and Yoga Practice Converge in the Teachings of the Drikungpa*.

———. 2006. *Licht, das die Dunkelheit durchbricht: Einführung in die "angeborene Einheit" von Drikung Kyobpa Jigten Gönpo*. Edited and translated by Jan-Ulrich Sobisch. Edition und Übersetzung. München: Otter Verlag.

———. 2011. "Guru-Devotion in the bKa' brgyud pa Tradition: The Single Means to Realisation." In *PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, 211–55. Beiträge zur Zentralasienforschung: Mahāmudrā and the bKa'-brgyud Tradition. Königswinter.

———, trans. 2017. "Wasserkristall. Ein Kommentar zu Tilopas 'Ganges-Mahamudra' von S.H. Drikung Kyabgön Chetsang Rinpoche." dGongs1. 2017. https://dgongs1.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/chu-shel-unicode1.pdf.

———. 2018a. "'Compassionate Killing' Revisited: The Making and Unmaking of the Killing Bodhisattva." *The Eastern Buddhist* 49 (1+2): 147–79.

———. 2018b. "Paracanonical Manuscript Traditions of Tilopa's *Ganggā ma Mahāmudrā:* The Tibetan Text of the Oral Transmission of Cakrasaṃvara and the Ḍākinī." In *Saddharmāmṛtam: Festschrift für Jens-Uwe Hartmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, 459–76. Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 93. Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien.

———. 2019. "Paracanonical Manuscript-Traditions of Tilopa's *Ganggā ma Mahāmudrā:* Translation of the Version Preserved by the Aural Transmission Tradition." In *Unearthing Himalayan Treasures Festschrift for Franz-Karl Ehrhard*, edited by Volker

Caumanns, Marta Semesi, and Nikolai Solmsdorf, 417–31. Marburg: Indica et Tibetica Verlag.

———. 2020a. "'Jig rten gsum mgon's *dGongs gcig* on the Relation Between Mahāmudrā and the Six Yogas of Nāropa." In *Mahāmudrā in India and Tibet*, edited by Roger R. Jackson and Klaus-Dieter Mathes, 170–84. Brill's Tibetan Studies Library 44. Leiden: Brill.

———. 2020b. *The Buddha's Single Intention: Drikung Kyobpa Jikten Sumgön's Vajra Statements of the Early Kagyü Tradition*. Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

———. 2022. "Karma in Buddhism and the Problems of Cross-Cultural and Cross-Religious Comparison of 'Guilt' and 'Forgiveness'." In *Guilt, Forgiveness, and Moral Repair*, edited by Maria-Sibylla Lotter and Saskia Fischer, 201–25. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stearns, Cyrus. 1996. "The Life and Tibetan Legacy of the Indian Mahāpaṇḍita Vibhūticandra." *Journal of the International Academy of Buddhist Studies* 19 (1): 127–68.

Stenzel, Julia. 2008. "From Radishes to Realization: Saraha and His Impact on the Mahāmudrā Tradition of the Tibetan Karma Kagyu School." PhD diss, Rosemead, CA: University of the West.

Tillemans, Tom J.F. 1984. "Two Tibetan Texts on the 'Neither One nor Many' Argument for Śūnyatā." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 12: 357–88.

Tiso, Francis, and Fabrizion Torricelli. 1991. "The Tibetan Text of Tilopa's *Mahāmudropadeśa*." *East and West* 41.

Torricelli, Fabrizio. 1993. "Chos drug and bKa' -babs bzhi Material for a Biography of the Siddha Tilopa." *East and West* 43 (1/4): 185–98.

———. 2000. "Padma dkar-po's Arrangement of the 'bDe-mchog snyan-brgyud." *East and West* 50 (1/4): 359–86.

Traleg Kyabgon. 2004. *Mind at Ease: Self-Liberation Through Mahamudra Meditation*. Boston: Shambala.