



## Mahamudra Pith Instruction

by Mahasiddha Tilopa

In the language of India: *Mahamudra Upadesham*.  
In the language of Tibet: *Chakgya Chenpö Men-ngak*.  
In the language of English: *Mahamudra Pith Instruction*.

*Homage to the glorious innate one!*

1. You endured hardship, are devoted to the guru,  
And have born suffering, wise Naropa—  
Fortunate one, keep this in mind!
2. Mahamudra cannot be taught.  
Yet, consider: in space, what is the basis for what?  
Likewise, your own mind—Mahamudra—has no basis,  
So rest at ease in the unaltered natural state.  
When bonds are loosened, liberation is doubtless.
3. Consider: when you look into the center of space, seeing ceases.  
Likewise, when mind looks at mind,  
All thoughts cease and highest awakening is reached.
4. Consider: mists and clouds rise from the ground and disperse in the sky.  
They neither go nor remain anywhere.  
Likewise, all thoughts arise from the mind.  
When the mind is seen, the waves of thought clear away.
5. Consider: the sky is naturally devoid of shape or color.  
It remains unchanged by white or black taints.  
Likewise, the nature of mind is devoid of shape or color  
And cannot be tainted by white virtues or black misdeeds.
6. Consider: even though we label space as “empty,”  
Nothing of the sort can really be said about space.  
Likewise, though we describe mind as “luminous,”  
There is no true basis for labeling it in that way.
7. Consider: the sun’s essence is clear and bright,

And cannot be obscured by a thousand eons of darkness.  
Likewise, the mind's essence is luminosity,  
And cannot be obscured by eons in samsara.

8. Thus, the nature of mind has always been like space.  
There is no Dharma that is not included therein.

9. Stop all physical activity: remain in a relaxed state.  
Stop all talking: let empty sounds resound as echos.  
Do not think of anything: look into the definitive Dharma.

10. The body is hollow like a bamboo shaft.  
Mind, like the center of the sky, is beyond thought.  
Rest at ease in that state, without negating or affirming anything.

11. When there is no observer, the mind is Mahamudra.  
By habituating yourself to this, you will attain highest awakening.

12. Whether in the teachings of mantra, of the paramitas,  
Of the Vinaya, Sutra, or Abhidharma,  
There is no text or philosophical position  
Through which luminosity Mahamudra can be seen.

13. Any opinion you hold obscures you from seeing luminosity.  
Conceptual vows miss the point of samaya.  
Do not think, let go of all ambition.

What arises will dissolve, like ripples in the water.  
No placing, no observing—when you keep to this point  
You are keeping samaya, like a lamp in the darkness.

14. Free of all opinion or philosophical position,  
You will comprehend the entirety of the Dharma teachings.  
When you open to this, you are free from samsara's prison.  
When you settle in this, all misdeeds and obscurations burn away.  
This is called "the Light of the Teachings."

15. Foolish people who have no interest in this  
Are always carried away by samsara's currents.  
Poor, foolish ones, their suffering in the lower realm is unbearable!  
If you wish to be free of it, follow a skilled teacher.  
When their blessings enter your heart, your mind is liberated.

16. *Ho!* The concerns of samsara cause pointless suffering.  
We engage in such nonsense—focus instead on the truly meaningful!  
Transcending dualistic fixation is the king of views.  
Remaining undistracted is the king of meditation.  
Effortless non-action is the king of conduct.  
Freedom from hope and fear is the actual fruition.

17. Get past the observer, and mind's nature will reveal itself.  
Tread no path, and you will enter the path to buddhahood.  
Get used to non-meditation, and you will attain highest awakening.

18. *Alas!* Observe well all worldly matters:  
Nothing lasts, like illusions or dreams.  
Illusions and dreams have no real point,  
So be weary, and give up worldly concerns.

19. Cut all bonds of attachment and aversion to people and places,  
And stay alone in the mountains or forests to meditate.  
Remaining in the state of non-meditation,  
When you attain the unattainable, you attain Mahamudra.

20. Consider: the branches and leaves of a tree spread from its trunk.  
If you cut the root, a myriad branches will dry out.  
Likewise, if you cut the root of the mind, the leaves of samsara will dry out.

21. Consider: the darkness accumulated over a thousand eons  
Is dispelled by a single lamp.  
Likewise, a single instant of mind's luminosity  
Dispels eons of ignorance, mideeds, and obscurations.

22. Ho! The mind cannot see that which is beyond the mind.  
Doing will not bring you to the realization of non-doing.  
If you wish to attain the state of non-doing beyond the mind,  
Cut the root of mind, and rest in naked awareness.

23. Let the water muddied by thoughts settle into clarity.  
Do not block or engage with appearances, let them be.  
Without adoption or rejection, appearance and existence are freed into Mahamudra.  
Let go of misdeeds, obscurations, and habits in the unborn all-ground.  
Stop all pride and judgement, and rest in the unborn essence.  
Let appearances and projections—all mental experiences—disintegrate.

24. The supreme king of views is boundless and limitless.  
The supreme king of meditations is endless, vast and profound.  
The supreme king of conducts is decisive impartiality.  
The supreme king of results is hope-free self-liberation.

25. At first, it is like rapids in a gorge.  
Then, it moves gently like the Ganges river.  
Finally, it is like the child river meeting its mother.

26. For those of lower capacity who cannot settle in this,  
Practice the essentials of the winds, and sharpen your awareness.  
Through the various gazes and ways of focusing the mind,

Train your mind until it truly comes to rest.  
27. Practicing with a consort, empty-bliss wakefulness arises.  
Practice uniting the blessings of method and wisdom.  
Let it descend gently, coil, and draw it back up.  
Lead it to its place, and let it suffuse the body.  
If you do this without desire, empty-bliss wakefulness will dawn.

28. You will live long without white hair, blossoming like a full moon.  
Your complexion will be radiant, and your strength like a lion's.  
Swiftly attaining the common siddhis, you will open to the most supreme.

May this essential Mahamudra pith instruction  
Be taken to heart by all fortunate ones!

*This concludes the instructions given by Lord Tilopa to Naropa on the banks of the Ganges.  
May it be auspicious!*



### **Translation Origin**

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