From the Mahāmudrā Preliminary Practices: Continuous Integration with Ground, Path, and Fruition

by Khenpo Gangshar Wangpo

A gentle rain of sacred dharma falls from the many clouds of kindness gathered in the ungraspable sky, moistening the fields of fortunate disciples and causing a continual sprouting of virtue. Widely renowned and most glorious Guru, you are the ground of all benefit and happiness — remain forever within my heart.

Hey! Listen well, my most fortunate and meritorious child!
As you have acquired this human form, don't squander it as if wasting a precious prize — take full advantage of its freedoms and opportunities.

You may now have that which is hard to come by, but the time of your demise is unknown. Why, then, wouldn't you continually ponder mortality and life's impermanence?

If you remember this from the very depths of your heart, will you have the bravado to try and deceive the karmic law of cause and effect?

Whatever roots of virtue you amass will never reach beyond the causes of saṃsāra; reflecting upon the *duḥkha* experience thereof why not capture the stronghold of the natural state — great emptiness?

When you wish to be quickly freed from the ocean of saṃsāra take the stable and unfailing Three Jewels as your refuge. To seek refuge for yourself alone is a partial path; continually train, therefore, in the altruistic attitude of Bodhicitta.

The gateways to accumulate this essential merit are the royal practices of accumulation and purification — the six perfections; all hindrances are to be dissolved within Vajrasattva's heart; and to clear obstacles and make progress, recall the Guru's kindness.

Don't be distracted by complex and wordy Ngöndro liturgies; simply ponder these essential points again and again, and soon both preliminary and actual practices will be part of your experience, assuring victory over the Māra of the Emotions.

If you are unable to distinguish ground, path, and fruition, your practice will be like a wanderer among unknown valleys. Therefore familiarize yourself with the path of Mahāmudrā, the very pinnacle of both causal and resultant vehicles, sūtra and tantra.

The nature of your mind is the primordial Buddha. However, not realizing this has caused you to fall under the power of confusion and the torture of acceptance and rejection called saṃsāra. This is universally accepted as the ground.

When this confusion arises, if you are able to, simply sustain the naked inner glow of ordinary, empty awareness and meet the natural state beyond help and harm — this is what is called the path.

When there is no distraction, either day or night, an all-pervasive evenness beyond the confines of both hope and fear is experienced; wisdom's strength is powerful, a natural compassion wells up from within, and both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are actualized — this is the result.

These, then, are ground, path, and fruition. There is little point in a partial understanding, so familiarize yourself with them and thoroughly integrate them into your mind.

These points are the very quintessence of my own practice. I have offered them to you in the hope they will be of benefit and that you yourself will enact continual altruistic activities — cherish them as the wisdom wheel, the very sharp weapon of skillful means.

These words of advice given in accord with my own experience are to the point, rich in meaning, and deep. I, the old beggar Gangshar Wangpo, wrote whatever words came to mind in order to present them to you, Salje Dampa, Vajra-master of Surmang.

| Translated by Sean Price, 2019.

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