



Introducing Mahamudra
by
the 12th Chamgon Tai Situ Rinpoche

As I was requested, I am going to give teachings on Mahamudra. Mahamudra, as a teaching, is presented in an enormous amount of texts, some of which might take a very long time: some as much as a year, with daily teaching sessions. Then, Mahamudra introducing the nature of mind might not even take one hour. So there is so much variety in the Mahamudra teachings. Therefore, I am not going to teach from just one particular Mahamudra text. This will be very much like an introduction for those who don't know anything about Mahamudra, or for those who know very little about Mahamudra. For those who know a lot about Mahamudra, it will be a reminder, because when you know a lot you might get a little bit mixed up. So this might sort out some of the over lapping and some of the confusion, or what is unclear about the Mahamudra teachings in general. So for that purpose, I am teaching Mahamudra here as an introduction or clarification or general teaching.

Chagya Chenpo

First of all we have to define the terminology. Mahamudra is Sanskrit terminology, and it is translated into Tibetan as *chagya chenpo*. So the terminology itself, or we can call it a title, even though it's not really appropriate to give a title to something that doesn't have anything to do with a title. It's a little confusing, but we have to "play dumb." We know Mahamudra cannot be boxed into anything or packaged, but we have to play dumb and package it, and then put the title "Mahamudra" on it. We have to do that, otherwise we might get very confused, and even worse we might get lost. It could be like a 1000 story building with 10,000 rooms which have no floor numbers and no room numbers: it would be very complicated to find anything. So we have to conventionalise the ultimate, and give a title to something that cannot be restricted or limited by a title.

Now the Mahamudra word itself, *chagya chenpo*, somehow has to describe what the teaching is. So here, the simplest way to define the Mahamudra terminology is to say that everything which is relative, from heaven to hell, is part and parcel of the most sacred, most ultimate and most profound essence. So let's put it this way: the most undefiled and pure environment of a Buddha, or pure land of a Buddha, and the most painful, negative environment of hell are connected. They are not un-connected. As long as something is there, it has to be connected with everything else. For example, there is the most profound and pure being, a bodhisattva,

and there is the most neurotic and evil being, whoever it is. As long as they are in the universe, they have to move in the same space, they have to breathe the same air, they have to influence the short wave, medium wave and all kind of waves of the universe. So they are all interconnected. You cannot separate anybody from anybody, and you cannot separate anything from anything. Everything is connected. So that is the relative understanding of Mahamudra. Now the ultimate potential of that is that the worst being has the possibility and the potential to be the best person, and the chance and potential to become Buddha. So when we see a bad person – I don't know what it could be that your definition of a bad person is, but I am sure that each one of us has a definition of a bad person, the worst person – in Mahamudra understanding that is a Buddha who does not know that they are Buddha. They misused their time and opportunity and got it wrong. So temporarily they appear and manifest as a result of their own doing. Here, temporarily doesn't mean one week: temporarily might mean ten billion centuries or ten centuries or three life times – it depends. But temporarily, as long as it is not forever, is temporary. So in that way, the definition of Mahamudra terminology is most comprehensive, and is the most ultimate aspect of description of the teaching of Buddha.

Then we have the Mahamudra lineage, and the practitioners of the Mahamudra lineage. This means the teachings of Mahamudra, which are bestowed by the Buddha Shakyamuni, who in this case we call Buddha Vajradhara. The Buddha Vajradhara's teaching, which is the essence of all the teachings, has continued from there until today, in an unbroken lineage of transmission. So how does the lineage get broken? The lineage means the Buddha's wisdom. Buddha is the embodiment of wisdom, and Buddha is the embodiment of compassion. That compassion and wisdom are received by the disciple, who is the embodiment of devotion. The devotion of the disciple and the compassion of the Buddha connect, and then wisdom is transmitted. That is the blessing; that is the transmission. If that connection is broken then the lineage is broken. But that will never happen from the Buddha's side; that will happen from us, the followers side. So that connection, unbroken from Buddha up till now, is the Mahamudra lineage. Anybody who comprehends the Mahamudra teaching, who implements the Mahamudra teaching and who lives according to the Mahamudra view, practice and action, then that is a Mahamudra practitioner. Whoever manages that pretty well, then that is a Mahamudra yogi. Whoever does not manage that very well, but tries, is a Mahamudra follower. Whoever supports that is a Mahamudra patron, and whoever admires that is a Mahamudra devotee. So there are devotees, patrons, practitioners, yogis and so on and so forth. So that is Mahamudra: the lineage.

Now there is a little, how do you say, "unfinished business" here, because Mahamudra means everything, but now here is the Mahamudra lineage. One minute it is everything, and the next minute it is somebody, but not everybody. How come? Well that is quite easy to understand and comprehend. The Mahamudra practitioner's view, practice and meditation is about

everything; that's what it is. But it's like when a person has very clear, good eyes and can see everything clearly, but another person doesn't have clear eyes and can't see everything clearly. Or a person who has lost one eye and cannot see three dimensionally. If a person is sick with hepatitis they see everything yellow. If a person has bronchitis they see everything as white and grey. In that way the vision and the perception is limited. In this way, a person who practices Mahamudra is supposed to be able to see everything clearly, with Mahamudra view, but we can't claim that we do that all the time. Sometimes we might, but at other times we can't. It's like when we catch cold or hepatitis: we have to put on eye glasses and so on. In this way we are not perfect, but we try our best. So I think this much might give a very basic, very simple definition of the terminology and the title Mahamudra itself.

The Source of Mahamudra

When we say "teaching of Buddha," it means sutra, Abhidharma, Vinaya and tantra. These are the teachings of the Buddha. But it is very interesting, because these days Buddhism has become so popular, and everybody knows a little piece of Buddhism. Because it is so popular it becomes a household language, but then it can become not so clear and sometimes even confused. For example, these days, if somebody sees a Buddhist person reading a book, they always say "Oh he's reading a sutra." I even saw one book about a Buddhist printing press, and the title of the book is "Buddhist Sutra Printing Press." So that means that in that printing press there will be only sutra. There will be no Abhidharma, no Vinaya and no tantra: only sutra. Anyway, the essence of the tantra, the Vinaya, the Abhidharma and the sutra is the Mahamudra. Now out of all of these, which particular teaching of Buddha says this? It is the tantra. The tantric teachings of Lord Buddha cover everything. In the tantra you find the teaching of sutra, Vinaya and Abhidharma, but in the sutra, the Abhidharma and the Vinaya you will not find the teaching of tantra. So the tantric teachings of the Lord Buddha are the essence of everything. This means that the Mahamudra teaching is the principle and the path that is given in the teaching of the tantra. In the tantra itself, there are so many levels, and the highest of these is anuttarayoga tantra. So the Mahamudra teaching is the essence of the anuttarayoga tantra: the highest of all the tantra's that manifest from Lord Buddha. These tantric teachings, such as Guhyasamaja, Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, Kalachakra etc., are from the anuttarayoga tantra, and the Mahamudra principle and teachings are the essence of that tantra.

The source of the Mahamudra teachings is the Buddha. These days people use these words "Lord Buddha's words" or "Lord Buddha's teachings" and that's fine, but as a Mahamudra practitioner we never think that Buddha was there and some crowd gathered, and he was in his room thinking about what to tell them. Then he did some homework, sought through his mind, and said "This is what I am going to say," and then came out and talked about this particular thing and taught it. Our Mahamudra idea of Buddha is never like that. Buddha

manifested as a result of what made him Buddha: his compassion manifested. So, to anybody who has devotion, Buddha will manifest to them. According to the capacity of the being, the Buddha's teaching manifests. They hear him say things according to their own capacity: their level of maturity, their level of devotion, and according to their level of compassion for all sentient beings, which we should call their motivation. According to that, the Buddha's teaching manifests. So although we have to say the words such as "Buddha spoke," "Buddha taught," "Buddha said that," and "this is what Buddha meant," we have to say these things, but we can never mean that. Because if Prince Siddhartha was like that then he is not the kind of Buddha that we believe in. He is a very wise person, a very intelligent person and a very clear minded person, but that's it. That's not Buddha. Buddha is beyond all of that. Buddha is not within the perimeter of dualism; Buddha is beyond dualism. Buddha is not limited by anything; Buddha is limitless. So in this way the tantric teachings, such as the anuttarayoga tantra texts that I have mentioned, these tantras and Buddha are inseparable. They are the embodiment of the Buddha. The teaching of Buddha is the embodiment of the Buddha. It is not the thought of the Buddha, or the words of the Buddha; it is the embodiment or manifestation of the Buddha. It manifests in the sound, and beings saw Buddha speak. Actually, in the sutra, Buddha once said "I did not say anything, but all sentient beings heard it". So surely, from the Mahamudra point of view, Buddha didn't even say that [laughter]. So you can't say that that was the only thing he spoke: he didn't even say that. There was a need for that, so that's what manifested. That's what those particular beings heard and that's it. In this way the *gyu*, or the tantra, is the actual teachings of the Buddha, in which the Mahamudra aspect of teaching is taught. That is one source.

The second source of the Mahamudra teachings is called *gyazhung*. *Gyazhung* actually means those texts which were written by the great masters of India: the mahapanditas and mahasiddhas of India. Those teachings were translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan and are called *gyazhung*. What defines a teaching rather than just a book is that it is the teaching of the lineage, and not somebody's research and thesis or somebody's interest. For example, every year at the Frankfurt book-fare in Germany there are tens of thousands of newly published books, and all of them we would not consider this kind of text (but some of them might be). So *gyazhung* means the teachings about Mahamudra. This is Mahamudra *gyazhung*. *Gyazhung* can be about anything, so Mahamudra *gyazhung* is the teachings about Mahamudra, written or spoken by great enlightened masters of the lineage of Mahamudra in India. All of these texts were translated, I think, more than a thousand years ago. So they are not recent translations. They are old, or ancient, translations. These teachings are numerous; there are so many. There are specific teachings, such as the Mahamudra *doha*. *Doha* is like inspirational sacred poetry, a little bit like a song. For example, the *Mahamudra Upadesha* or *Ganges Mahamudra*, by Tilopa; so named because he wrote it at the bank of the river Ganges. Then there are other texts like Naropa's condensed text of view, which includes the philosophy, the view and the perception. So that is another text. Also, there are enormous

numbers of teachings that are individual teachings: the eighty-four mahasiddhas' teachings, their poems and their songs; the teachings of the thirty great enlightened women – the dakinis – their teachings, songs, poems and so forth. All of these kinds of teachings that are translated into Tibetan are called *gyazhung*. They are another source.

The third source is *mengak*. *Mengak* means something like sacred instruction. It is not secret instruction, but sacred always becomes secret, because sacred, by definition, means that if somebody cannot comprehend it then it is not available. It is only available to those who can comprehend it. So that is sacred. The transmission of sacred instructions from the great masters of India and Tibet, as far as the lineage is concerned, is called *mengak*. Most *mengak* are written down on paper, but also a tremendous amount of *mengak* is from person to person: from lips to ear. So that is ear transmission. It is not written down.

But these days we have a tremendous amount of liberation, so even the sacred *mengak* texts, some of these are even translated, and many of them are printed. You can buy for just a few dollars. Very cheap. These are available, but an old fashioned and backward person like me doesn't like it, because then it is not sacred anymore. It becomes, how do you say, "accelerated" or "short circuit," and so it will be spoiled that way. The lineage can be destroyed very easily if *mengaks* do not remain as *mengaks*. So this is maybe a little bit off: a sign of this time of degeneration, but of course not hopeless.

Anyway, there are a tremendous amount of all of these kinds of teachings, and in our lineage there are three texts that somehow combine as one group of teachings. The first is *Ngedon Gyamtso* or *Mahamudra Ocean of Certainty*. That's an elaborate text which has ninety-seven steps of instruction, with each step having many steps of instruction within it. That is a tremendously detailed teaching about Mahamudra practice. Then there is a secondary or medium size text, which is *Marig Munsel* or *Dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance* – I think that is how it is translated. That is the secondary text. The shortest text in this particular group of texts is *Choku Dzuptsuk*, which means *Pointing Out the Dharmakaya*: you use your finger to point out the dharmakaya. That means the direct introduction to the nature of mind: the essence of our self; the essence of everything. So those are three particular texts written by the Gyalwa Karmapa. But then, of course, there are tremendous numbers of other instruction texts, and a tremendous amount of person to person transmission lineage of Mahamudra instruction. So *gyu*, *gyazhung* and *mengak* are the physical sources of the Mahamudra teachings, which are the essence of all the teachings of the Buddha. That's where Mahamudra comes from.

Ground, Path and Fruition

Now, since we have a basic understanding of the terminology of Mahamudra and the source of

the Mahamudra teachings, I think it is extremely important, not only for Mahamudra practitioners but any practitioner of dharma, to understand why we are practicing dharma. What for? You know? When we say "May I become Buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings" then we have to know: why would becoming Buddha be beneficial for all other sentient beings? Why should all sentient beings become Buddha? For what? What is the connection between Buddha and all sentient beings? What are they trying to become when they say "May I become Buddha"? We have to understand all of these things, otherwise it becomes some kind of curiosity or hobby, "lets find out": sort of temporary entertainment, you know? It doesn't go further than that. So therefore, we have to know as clearly as possible what all these things mean. What am I? What is Buddha? What are all sentient beings? When I say "May I become Buddha" and "For the benefit of all sentient beings" what am I actually saying? What does it all really mean? We can understand this through the very basic way of teaching dharma, which is through three things: ground, path and fruition. Through these three simple principles we can comprehend and have some idea of what we are saying and what we are doing.

Ground means potential. Path means how to materialise, purify or develop our potential. How to go about it – that is path. Fruition is exactly the same as potential, because potential and fruition are the same thing. When the potential is fully developed, then that is fruition. You cannot achieve something that has nothing to do with you. What you will achieve at the end will be exactly what you are: what is in you or what is about you. So the potential and the fruition are the same thing. Undeveloped potential is ground, fully developed potential is fruition, and how to develop undeveloped potential into fully developed potential is path. So ground, path and fruition. Through this we will then understand what Mahamudra practice is, and what we are saying in the Mahamudra dedication when we say "Because of this merit may I attain the full realisation of Mahamudra, and lead all sentient beings to the realisation of Mahamudra." It's the same thing as "Because of this merit may I attain buddhahood and lead all sentient beings to the realisation of buddhahood," but in the Mahamudra prayer, sometimes we say that.

I have been teaching you about the general definition of Mahamudra, and the source of Mahamudra teachings. Then I introduced to you the principle of ground, path and fruition. So that is a sort of general outline which is very simple, but it can somehow unfold. Otherwise you might call it complicated or a deep subject, but ground, path and fruition is easy to remember, and somehow clarifies so many things. Sometimes it is a little bit misunderstood, but when you define it clearly then it is so simple. When you say "I want to be Buddha," you must have a ground for saying that. On what ground are you saying that? Your ground is that "I am an unenlightened Buddha, because I have the same potential as Buddha Shakyamuni – equal." Every sentient being has the same potential as Buddha Shakyamuni, and is equal to Buddha Shakyamuni in essence or in potential, but you should never mistake that for thinking you are equal to Buddha right now (but I don't know, maybe there is some Buddha manifest here as

an ordinary person. In that case I don't have to confess, because Buddha purposely manifested like that, and that is part of the Buddha's aspiration. If Buddha said before his enlightenment "May I appear as an ordinary person so that I can benefit all the sentient beings, especially those people who call themselves teachers, and give them the privilege and opportunity to teach me." [laughter] Yes; why not? That is a very, very profound connection. That is a very great honour; so that could be. In that case, I don't even have to apologise because I am just following the Buddha's will). Anyway, we are not enlightened, because of our own cause and condition, which is created by ourself: with our own will, with our own decision, with our own effort. That is why we are not Buddha.

Buddha Shakyamuni and three other Buddhas have already become Buddha on this planet, in this galaxy and in this solar system. So four individuals have already become Buddha, with Buddha Shakyamuni as the fourth. So those four were prophesied Buddhas. How many un-prophesied Buddhas were there? It would be countless. From the beginning of the human evolution on this planet, we Tibetans believe that we are evolved from monkeys and ghosts. Once, something like a ghost or a demon, which was female, came together with a male monkey, and the offspring of that combination were Tibetans [laughter]. It's interesting, because I sometimes think how come? [laughter] We are not like demons or monkeys; so, how can that be possible? But some other times I am convinced [laughter], because if you look at Tibetan history: if Guru Rinpoche did not come to Tibet and tame us, we would be impossible [laughter]. It took somebody like Guru Rinpoche, who did not just teach and bless, but he performed miracles, you know? He turned mountains upside down and boiled an enormous lake: he boiled it with his spiritual power. But even by doing all of that sort of thing, it still took quite a bit of time and effort to make us normal [laughter]. So I think maybe there is some truth in this combination or this genetic engineering. Anyway, by the blessing of the Buddha, by the blessing of Guru Rinpoche and especially by the blessing of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, who manifested in Tibet in so many ways: great masters like His Holiness Dalai Lama and His Holiness Gyalwa Karmapa are all manifestations of Avalokiteshvara. So with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas working so hard, and doing so many things to make us what we are, we are privileged. So what I am talking about here is: that since the beginning of the human evolution on this planet – which is relative of course – until now, the prophesied Buddhas are four, un-prophesied Buddhas... who knows? So many, but it cannot be countless. It can be countable, but we don't know.

By definition, in the entire universe, the sentient beings who attain buddhahood are countless. That is countless. Buddha describes this when he says "If there is one sentient being who attains enlightenment, or buddhahood, in a period of time which is a period of *yuga* then the equivalent amount to the grains of sand in the river Ganges attain buddhahood." That means that if one person attains enlightenment on one planet after such a long, long time, (*yuga* means a very long time. Some *yugas* are described as from the creation of a universe until its

destruction, and some *yugas* are described as the cycles within that period. So there are different kinds of *yugas*) Buddha said that even though it is that rare, still, every moment countless sentient beings have attained buddhahood. Because space has no end, you cannot count the universes. It is so infinite that, even though buddhahood is so rare, every moment countless numbers of sentient beings have attained buddhahood. Otherwise you end up with space having an end, and with the universes having a number. But there is no end. It is infinite. Therefore infinite beings have to be enlightened in every moment. So from the time when we began this session until now, in this couple of minutes, countless sentient beings have already attained enlightenment. That is not imagination; that's the facts. It has to be that way, otherwise nothing will make sense. So that is the reality.

Now, the ground, by definition, is that all sentient beings have Buddha potential. Those who made it are few, on our planet, but those who made it in the whole universe are countless. Why did that happen? Because that's their potential. That's their destiny. The destination of every single sentient being is absolute freedom with no limitation, and absolute freedom with no limitation is described by the word "buddhahood." Buddhahood means you are free with no limitation whatsoever, and that can only be for the purpose of no limitation. So if you wish to be free, without limitation, then it has to be for the purpose of freedom without limitation – for all sentient beings. If you wanted to be free with no limitation just for yourself, it is impossible, because that is the biggest limitation. It has to be for the limitless purpose; it has to be for the limitless outcome, and it has to come from the foundation or the ground: the base of the limitless potential.

So that is ground Mahamudra, and this is described as free from the extremes of eternalism and nihilism. Therefore, it is relative truth and absolute truth in union, which means the unity of relative truth and absolute truth. Now, the "extremes of eternalism and nihilism" is what has to be overcome to understand and define the ground Mahamudra. The outcome of that is that relative truth and absolute truth will be in unity. Okay, so that is ground Mahamudra.

Now the path Mahamudra. Why have so many beings attained buddhahood, and why have so many of us still not yet attained buddhahood? Why? It's not because somebody made some kind of mistake somewhere, or that we lost our plane ticket, but it happened. We are still here, when others have already got there. It is because of our own doing. It is not the fault of somebody's unfair play, and it is not because of some kind of corruption somewhere. It is our own unfair play and our own corruption that made us stay behind and be left behind. You can't blame anybody (everyone is interconnected, of course, but that doesn't deserve blame).

Now, the path is described as free of assertion and free of denial. So you have to be free of asserting. For example, it's like you saw a mouse, but you say you saw a tiger. That is assertion. Denial is like you stepped on a cockroach, but you say you did not step on anything.

That is denial. So free of assertion and denial. In the path, or in the practice, when we do good things, and we are attached to our good practice then that is assertion, and that is something we have to overcome. It is not something we have to, how do you say, abandon. We cannot, because as a beginner practitioner we should be attached to our good practice. We should be upset when our practice is not doing well, otherwise we will never practise, you know? So that is there, but it cannot go further than that, and we have to do our best to overcome that, rather than increase it. So that is assertion. Denial is when you learn lots of things such as emptiness, non-duality, primordial wisdom and so on and so forth. Then by learning those things you think you understand everything, but you don't, and you say "I don't have to practice; doing good is emptiness; doing bad is emptiness; the potential of good and bad is the same." If you have too much of that kind of perception, and you act on it, then you have denial. You are a little bit like the devil, because your good understanding becomes the obstacle for your progress. So these ways of assertion and denial are both the obstacles one has to, very skillfully, overcome. Once that happens then the practice, or the path, is the accumulation of merit and wisdom in union: the unity of the accumulation of merit and the accumulation of wisdom.

How do you accumulate merit? By doing good things and by avoiding bad actions. By learning, by doing prayers, by being generous and so on. That is accumulation of merit. The accumulation of wisdom you cannot gain like that. The accumulation of wisdom occurs as a result of letting your inner potential or inner Buddha manifest. That is meditation, and the accumulation of wisdom is through meditation. The accumulation of merit is through activity: physical, mental and verbal activity. So, the path which is free of assertion and denial is the union of the accumulation of merit and wisdom. That is the path.

Then, the fruition should be free from, or free of, samsaric end or passive end. Many times the word nirvana is used here, but it means peace or the passive end. Of course samsaric end is something we should be free of, and between samsaric end and nirvana end we should choose the nirvana end, but actually, as far as being an end, it's the same. So what does that mean? If we go on with worldly activities as a worldly person with a worldly motivation then we will end up in the samsaric end just as usual. That's very easy to understand, because we are in samsara: you are in samsara; I am in samsara; all of us are in samsara, and all of us are going in circles. Sometimes my circle is a little bigger, so that I might not notice that I am going in a circle, and sometimes your circle is a little smaller, so you might feel you are going in a circle – sometimes. But sometimes it could even be vice versa. It's not supposed to be, but I think it could be. Anyway, the end of the whole thing about samsara is that no matter how big or small the circle you walk, at the end of the day you did not get anywhere. You can walk very hard; you can be running, or you can be carrying things, but you end up in the same place. That is samsara. The nirvana end means that if we overcome all of that then we have no pain, suffering or defilements, but we don't have the primordial wisdom awakened. So we will

be very comfortable, very happy and very peaceful, in something like paradise. The idea of paradise is that everything is positive and nothing is negative. That is nirvana: the passive peace. That is good, but it's not buddhahood, which is free from, and a step beyond, both of those ends of samsara and nirvana. It is the union of the two kayas; that is how it is described.

What are the two kayas? One is the dharmakaya, and the other is the form kayas. There are kayas that have some limitation, and the kaya that doesn't have any limitation. Kaya means body. The limitless kaya is called dharmakaya, which is the mind of the Buddha, but the form kayas are limited, and they are called the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya. Sambhogakaya has lesser limitations than nirmanakaya, but the sambhogakaya still has limitations, because sambhogakaya is not the dharmakaya. Sambhogakaya means how Buddha will be perceived by those who are highly enlightened: those above the first bodhisattva level. How they perceive Buddha is called sambhogakaya. Nirmanakaya is how ordinary beings, who do not have the realisation up to the first level bodhisattva, or are below the first level bodhisattva, perceive Buddha. When they are in the presence of the Buddha, how they perceive the Buddha, how they see the Buddha, how they hear the Buddha, that is the nirmanakaya. So sambhogakaya has less limitations than the nirmanakaya, but it still has limitations. The unity of dharmakaya and the form kaya means that Buddha is limitless: he accomplished the dharmakaya and is the embodiment of the dharmakaya, but, for the benefit of sentient beings, he spontaneously manifests as the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya. In that way the fruition is the unity of the two kayas.

Now with this we have a little bit of elaboration of the ground, path and fruition – I will try to get this right – the ground is free from the extremes of eternalism and nihilism. It is the unity of the absolute truth and the relative truth. The path is free from assertion and denial, and that will be the unity of the merit and wisdom accumulation. The fruition is free from the extremes of samsaric end and nirvana end, and that will be the unity of the dharmakaya and the form kayas.

So that is some detail about this, but some parts are missing so I want to add those. The ground Mahamudra is the basis of the Mahamudra path, and Mahamudra fruition is enlightenment itself. Then the path itself is the ways through which that potential will be fully developed. The fruition means the result of this path or the final fruition of the path, which is the fully maturing and fully matured potential, and the total liberation of the potential. That is the fruition. So that somehow makes the ground, path and fruition very personal, and related to each one of us individually.

For example, in the entire human realm – you can also include animals, but let's say humans – do you know anybody who achieved exactly what he or she wished to achieve, absolutely? Any

king, any president, prime minister, rich man, poor man, soldier, general, scholar or artist; you know? Anybody who said "I achieved exactly what I wished to achieve, ultimately." Of course people make decisions like "Oh, I have done enough. Okay, now alright" you know? There is a lot of that. I also do that – a lot. Many times; not only one time. Then I start something again. But anyway, there isn't anybody, really! If you travel all over the world: any place in the world. If you go to a high mountain – not too high but manageable for human beings – and you dig long enough, you will find some bricks there: some ruins of a house there, you know? People worked very hard to build those things. They brought all those stones all the way up there, sometimes using slaves, and they built there. They may have said "Oh yes, I will build what I want to build," but then what happened? Most of the time we don't even know who built those things; so it doesn't mean anything. In this way there is no end to the efforts and the desire of samsara. Really: there is no end.

But why does everybody think there is an end? Why does everybody work so hard, as if there were an end? In this world, everybody is busy doing something. Some people are doing something physically, some people are talking – I think I am included there right now – and why do they do all of that? Because they want to achieve something. And what makes them think that they want to achieve something? Because it is in them. They do not have any limitation, you know? Everyone does not have any limitation in their potential. So we say "Attachment is so much so that it can never be fulfilled." It's very true. You have to stop somewhere. You have to say to yourself "enough is enough," because if you don't you will go on forever. You might become the richest person in the neighbourhood, and then, from there, the most powerful person in the neighbourhood. Next you might become the most healthy person in the neighbourhood, and so on, and so forth. From there you want to achieve the same thing in the whole country, and then in the whole world, you know? You might even become the king of the world (I personally don't think I want to have that, because that will be lots of trouble, lots of problems: you have to take care of everybody). Anyway, if you become the king of the whole world, it is a guaranteed thing that within one week you will want to have something else. I guarantee it. The minute you own the whole world then you are looking for owning the Moon, maybe, or Mars. We have tried to conquer those things already, so it proves it. In that way, there is no end. That will never be fulfilled if we don't stop somewhere. Why is that? Because our potential has no limitations. Therefore, our desire, which is the light or the manifestation of our potential, has no limitation.

When will our limitless desire be fulfilled? Let's put it this way – for a minute make the negative think positive..... So, how do we fulfill our limitless, un-fulfilable, impossible greed? When we become free, with no limitation then it is fulfilled. So enlightenment is our destination, and our impossible greed proves it, you know? Greed is negative; of course it is bad, but there must be a reason why it is there. It cannot be a "bad" accident. That greed cannot be fulfilled by saying "Instead of everybody else, I want to be happy. Instead of

everybody else, I want to be free.”

“I want to be free, with no limitation, for the benefit of all sentient beings to be free with no limitation”: that is bodhichitta, that is compassion, and that is the ground Mahamudra. That ground Mahamudra, if nurtured and cultivated properly on the path, then, will be the fruition Mahamudra. Our impossible greed can never be fulfilled by eating everything that we like to eat, or doing everything that we like to do. It will never be fulfilled. It will get worse. Defeating all our enemies; helping all our friends; it cannot be fulfilled. It is impossible. It can only be fulfilled if we become free for the sake of all sentient beings freedom. Then it is fulfilled. So this is the fruition Mahamudra: one attains the dharmakaya so that the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya will manifest for the benefit of all sentient beings. That is the fruition. That is the destination.

What I am explaining here is that once we understand the ground, path, and fruition clearly – clear enough that we can believe in it – then we have Mahamudra view, Mahamudra attitude and Mahamudra perception. We shouldn't have a perception, but as long as we have one we can't help then we must have a good one. So that's Mahamudra perception, Mahamudra view. Once we have Mahamudra view, if we conduct ourselves according to the Mahamudra view then that is Mahamudra action. Then we meditate according to the Mahamudra meditation instructions, and that is Mahamudra meditation. So that is view, meditation and action. Without having clear understanding of ground, path and fruition, we cannot have the view. Without having the view, we cannot have the action and meditation, generally speaking. So, for that reason, it is quite important to understand.

But there is another side: if you have faith in the Buddha, if you have faith in the Buddha's teaching, and if you have faith in the practice of dharma then you don't have to know anything. If you practice with faith then everything works. You don't have to know ground, path and fruition. Whether you know it or not, it is there. When you know, nothing new appears, and when you don't know, nothing is disappearing. So you really don't have to know, but these days it is important to know. Why? Because this is a degenerating time.

I am not a negative person. I don't consider myself a pessimistic person. Actually I consider myself having some weakness of optimism [laughter], you know? So maybe my problem is optimism, not pessimism. But the fact of the matter is that this is a degenerating time; so, many things are getting worse, and many things are getting better. But it is those things that make us worse that are getting better, and those things that make us better that are getting worse. In that way, it's getting better for worse. That's true, I think. I could be wrong; I have the right to be wrong (right?), but I think that's true.

One thing that really proves this to me is that, these days, anything that is sacred and divine

needs a lot of explanation, and people don't believe it, but anything that is not sacred and not divine doesn't need any explanation, and everybody believes it. For example, many wars are being fought right now, all over the world, and most of the people that are fighting there don't know why. Only the ones who instigated the wars know, but the other people don't know. They just believe; so they follow and get themselves killed, or they kill other people and destroy so many things. Then think about making money: it's good that people make money, but lots of the ways that people make money are really other people's plans, and other people's ideas that they just follow. Many people just follow, and sometimes they get lucky, and they make some money, but many people are actually just donating a lot of money to those people who plan those things. They lose money, but they just go on, one loss after another. So in that way, they really don't need a lot of explanation. Also, with taking drugs, and all these kind of things: even if somebody explains so hard they still don't believe that person. They can see themselves getting crazy. They see themselves dying, and they see their brain becoming like a scrambled egg: it's not working anymore, not connected anymore, all separate, you know? One part of the brain doesn't function with another part; so two and two doesn't make four anymore. Two and two is maybe five or three or six. They see that they are confused, but still they go for it. They don't need explanation, and they don't need clarification. Then also with politics: many of the politicians, I think, don't even know what they are doing. They just believe, and they go for it. Of course all politicians are not bad; many of them are very good. If there was no policy, then of course, the world would be in chaos, but what I am saying is that nothing requires more explanation than dharma. So when it comes to dharma, everybody wants all the detailed explanations. Not only once, but two, three or four times, you know? But everything else doesn't need explanation, and people just follow. For example, with fashion: today you see a funny hat, which I think is a terrible hat, but tomorrow so many people are buying it and going crazy for it. So that way, everybody believes in things without having to know, except when it comes to something that is sacred and divine. This proves that this is a degenerating time. If it was not a degenerating time it would be the other way around, so that the things that are less meaningful, and even harmful, such as war, should need more explanation. People would find it very difficult to accept and very hard to participate. Something that is divine and profound, like dharma, would be easy for people to follow and easy to believe. If that happens then it shows that it is not a degenerating time but a generating time or a good time. So in this degenerating time, the clear understanding of ground, path and fruition will help us all, and will also equip us to help others. Because, after all, the basis of the Mahamudra is Mahayana, and the purpose of Mahayana is to help sentient beings. This is the foundation of all the highest teaching of Lord Buddha.

So, whatever we are learning here, we are learning so that we can benefit others. If we want to benefit others, there are many ways, but the easiest way is to make people understand something that is important and beneficial for them. If people come to us wanting to understand something about dharma, and we are able to explain to them, in a simple way, the

ground, path and fruition then it will help them. It will change their life. So in this way, I think explaining these simple things is very important, and I hope my limited knowledge is beneficial for you. Because you all have primordial wisdom, whatever information or teaching you receive here might help you, so that your primordial wisdom can start to work.

Now, when we meditate and practice, what is really happening to us is that our primordial wisdom is awakening. That's what it is. When we meditate, what we are doing is allowing our primordial wisdom to awaken. Even in an ordinary, day to day situation, like when you are in a terrible dilemma; if you are able to ask your friends to leave the room, and then you say to yourself "I am going to sit down and be quiet." If you do that for half an hour, then no matter what kind of terrible dilemma that you are in, you will see the situation very clearly. You will have a perspective over your problem, and you might even find out, to your surprise, that there is no problem at all. Maybe what you were calling a problem half an hour ago is actually a very good thing. Maybe it is exactly what you need to get, for what you want to achieve. Otherwise, it might be something that is a problem indeed, but there is more solution than problem itself, and I can guarantee you one thing (this is my little experience through the blessing of the dharma): the solution for the problem is in the problem. I guarantee you. It's always there. It's just like a question: when somebody asks a question, if that person breaks down that question for themselves then that is the answer. The answer is in the question, you know? The solution is in the problem, but it's very hard to see – especially if it is your problem. You can feel your problem from the tip of your hair into the middle of your bones, and therefore you cannot have the perspective easily, but if you can relax then you are able to see more clearly. That's the principle of meditation. When you meditate with sacred methods of meditation then, through the blessing of the lineage and so forth, that potential for seeing things clearly – the primordial wisdom – awakens. Even temporarily, it makes all the difference on earth, all the difference that you can think of. It will make a big difference, an enormous difference. So in that way, I think when people understand the ground, path and fruition, it will help. Why do people have all these problems, and why do they think that they want to be something? All of these things come from the ground or the potential. Okay. So I hope this is beneficial for you all.

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