

Aspirations for Mahamudra

The Actual Aim of Practice

Namo guru

Gurus and yidams, deities of the mandala,
Buddhas of the three times and ten directions and your offspring,
Consider me with kindness.
To fulfill these wishes, please pour your energy into me.

A river of virtue undefiled by the three spheres
Springs from the snow-mountain of pure actions and intentions —
Mine and those of sentient beings without limit.
May this river flow into the ocean of fourfold presence.

Until I awaken to full presence,
Through all my lifetimes, birth after birth,
May not even the words wrong and struggle be heard
And may I enjoy the wealth of oceans of well-being and virtue.

Having a free and well-favored life along with faith, energy and intelligence,
Having attended a worthy master and received the essential instructions,
May I practice the sacred dharma properly
In all my lives without interruption.

Studying logic and scripture frees me from the veil of ignorance.
Reflection on key instructions overcomes the darkness of doubt.
Light born of practice illumines the way things are. May the
radiance of the three wisdoms increase.

The basic ground — two truths, free from the extremes of order and chaos,
The excellent path — two gatherings, free from the extremes of embellishing and
diminishing,
The result obtained — two aims, free from the extremes of existence and peace.
May I meet teaching free from flaws or errors.

The ground of refinement — mind itself, empty and clear together;
The refining — the great vajra composure of mahamudra;
The purged — the incidental stains of confusion;
The refined result — immaculate empty presence: may I actually know it.

Confidence in outlook comes through cutting assumptions about the ground.
The key to practice is to maintain that without distraction.
The supreme expression is to exercise the sense of practice in everything.
May I have confidence in outlook, practice, and expression.

Every experience is a magical movement of mind.
Mind is no mind: mind's nature is empty.
Empty and immediate, mind may arise as anything.
Through careful probing, may I erase any sense of ground.

Perceptions that have never existed are mistaken for objects;
Because of ignorance, awareness is mistaken for a self;
Through the power of dualistic fixation I wander in samsara.
May ignorance and confusion be completely erased.

It doesn't exist: even buddhas do not see it.
It doesn't not exist: it is the basis of samsara and nirvana.
No contradiction: the middle way is union.
May I know the pure being of mind, free of extremes.

If one says, "It is this," nothing has been posited.
If one says, "It is not this," nothing has been denied.
Unconditioned pure being transcends intellect.
May I gain conviction in the possibility of true being.

Not knowing it, I spin in the seas of samsara,
Knowing it, buddha isn't anywhere else.
"It is everything," "It isn't anything": none of this.
Pure being, the basis of everything, may I see any misunderstanding here.

Since perception is mind and emptiness is mind,
And knowing is mind and confusion is mind,
And arising is mind and ending is mind,
May I erase all embellishments of mind.

Unpolluted by meditation with intellectual effort
Undisturbed by the winds of everyday affairs,
Not manipulating, knowing how to let what is true be itself,
May I become skilled in the practice of mind and maintain it.

The waves of subtle and coarse thoughts return to their source.
Undisturbed, the river of mind flows naturally.
Free from the contaminations of dullness and torpor,
May the still ocean of calm abiding become dependable.

As one looks again and again at the unseeable mind,
And sees vividly exactly why one sees nothing,
Doubts about the meaning of “is” and “isn’t” are erased.
Without confusion, may my own face know itself.

Look at objects and there is no object: one sees mind;
Look at mind and there is no mind: it is empty of nature;
Look at both of these and dualistic clinging subsides on its own.
May I know sheer clarity, the way mind is.

Free from mental constructions, it is called The Great Seal.
Free from extremes, it is called The Great Middle Way.
Because everything is complete here, it is also called The Great Completion.
May I gain the confidence that, in understanding one, I know them all.

The great bliss of non-attachment is continuous.
Sheer clarity without fixations is free of distortions.
Passing beyond intellect, non-thought is naturally present.
May these experiences continually arise without effort.

Feel-good energy surges subside on their own, and
Ugly thoughts and confusion dissolve into space—
Ordinary knowing doesn't manage or control.
May I know the truth of pure being, utter simplicity.

While beings, by nature, have always been awake,
Not knowing this, they wander in endless samsara.
For the unending struggles of sentient beings
May overwhelming compassion be born in my being.

While this compassion is active and immediate,
In the moment of compassion, its essential emptiness is nakedly clear.
This conjunction is the unfailing supreme path; Inseparable from
it, may I practice day and night.

With the special seeing and knowing that come through the power of practice,
I bring beings to spiritual maturity, purify domains of awakening, and
Fulfill the wishes of students to realize spiritual qualities.
May I be fully awake—the culmination of fulfillment, refinement, and ripening.

By the compassion of the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions
And the power of whatever pure virtue there may be,
May these wishes and those of all beings
Be fulfilled in keeping with our prayers.

Colophon

Aspirations for The Great Seal, the actual aim of practice, was composed by Lord Rangjung Dorje, Karmapa III. Ken McLeod originally translated this prayer at the request of a number of students who wished to make it part of their practice. In 2024, at Donna McLaughlin's request for the mahamudra-practice.com site, Ken revised his translation to correct some mistakes and to make the prayer read better when chanted.

