

5. The Great Seal and Related Instructions: Core Teachings of the Kagyü School

Translated by Peter Alan Roberts

The Great Seal (Mahamudra) constitutes one of the central teachings of the Kagyü school of Tibetan Buddhism. Originally formulated as a systematic teaching and practice in Tibet by Gampopa in the 11th century, the Great Seal teachings traces its sources to much earlier Indian materials, most importantly the perfection of wisdom sutras and the Doha cycles, a collection of spontaneous songs of spiritual experience by the accomplished Indian yogi Saraha. A key focus of Mahamudra teaching is the cultivation of profound insight into the nature of mind on the basis of sustained meditative concentration. A lucid work on this important teaching by the celebrated Mahamudra master Tselé Natsok Rangdröl (17th century) entitled *Stainless Lamp* forms the core text on Mahamudra in our present volume. Included in this volume are several other texts on Mahamudra, such as the 12th century master Shang Rinpoche's seminal texts and a short guide on Mahamudra by the great Karmapa Ranjung Dorje together with its commentary by Situ Tenpai Nyima. In addition, the volume contains an important work by Gampopa, the root text of Drigung Jikten Gompo's *Single Intention*, the sixth Shamar Chökyi Wangchuk's guide on the six yogas of Naropa, and finally Dakpo Tashi Namgyal's *Concise Presentation of the General Points of Tantra*. This last text belongs to the genre known as "general meaning" (*chi dön*) and represents a lucid and detailed systematic presentation of the Vajrayana path to enlightenment according to the Kagyü school. The texts in this volume were selected for inclusion in *The Library of Tibetan Classics* series to represent the core teachings of the Kagyü school by the contemporary Kagyü teacher H.E. Trangu Rinpoche.

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