

## Appendix 2

***Machik's Last Instructions***

For ninety-nine years,  
 I have worked for the benefit of beings.  
 Now this work is almost complete.  
 I will not take birth again in this human realm  
 in a physical form.  
 Nor will I leave behind any remains or relics.  
 But my emanations in the world will be innumerable,  
 And many will recognize them.  
 They will be perceived in different ways,  
 Depending on karma, pure or impure.  
 Understand this, my sons.

In the same way, mind itself, [natural and connate]  
 Has no support, has no object:  
 Let it rest in its natural expanse without any fabrication.  
 When the bonds [of negative thoughts] are released,  
 You will be free, there is no doubt.

As when gazing into space,  
 All other visual objects disappear,  
 So it is for mind itself.  
 When mind is looking at mind,  
 All discursive thoughts cease  
 And enlightenment is attained.

Fortunate heirs, keep this in your heart.  
 My instructions on Chöd  
 Are authentic teaching of Mahamudra [*Chakgya Chenpo*].  
 This Mahamudra cannot be explained in words.  
 It cannot be explained, but it is like this:

1a

*Chak* is the nature of emptiness [of the mind].  
*Gya* is liberation from the vastness of samsaric [appearances].  
*Chen po* is the inseparable union [of appearances and emptiness].  
 Primordially connate, like empty space  
 Does nothing, is not dependent on anything.

As in the sky all clouds disappear into sky itself;  
 Wherever they go, they go nowhere,  
 Wherever they are, they are nowhere.  
 This is the same for thoughts in mind:  
 When the mind looks at mind,  
 The waves of conceptual thought disappear.  
 As empty space is devoid of form, color or image,  
 So too, mind itself is free of form, color or image.

1b

As the heart of the sun  
 Cannot be veiled by an eternity of darkness  
 So too, the realization of the ultimate nature of the mind  
 Cannot be veiled by an eternity of samsara.

Even though empty space  
 May be named or conventionally defined,  
 It is impossible to point it out as "this."  
 It is the same for the clarity of mind itself:  
 Although its characteristics may be expressed,  
 It cannot be pointed out as "this."

The defining characteristic of mind  
 Is to be primordially empty like space;  
 The realization of the nature of mind  
 Includes all phenomena without exception.

Once discursive thoughts are totally abandoned,  
*Dharmakaya* is no other than this.

Once [discursive] mind is totally abandoned,  
 Fearsome places are no other than this.  
 Once virtue and non-virtue are totally abandoned,  
 Gods and demons are no other than this.  
 Once the six consciousnesses are totally abandoned,  
 The six classes of being are no other than this.

Once the eight consciousnesses are totally abandoned,  
 The eight armies of demons are no other than this.  
 Once wandering thoughts are totally abandoned,  
 Magical displays are no other than this,  
 Meditative absorption is no other than this,  
 The practice of the four daily sessions is no other than this.

Once the five poisons are totally abandoned,  
 The five wisdoms are no other than this.  
 Once the three poisons are totally abandoned,  
 The three kayas are no other than this.  
 Once conventional mind is totally abandoned,  
 Buddhahood is no other than this.

Once samsara is totally abandoned  
 Nirvana is no other than this  
 Once mental agitation is totally abandoned,  
 Skillful means are no other than this.  
 Once emptiness is totally abandoned,  
 Discriminating wisdom is no other than this.

2a

Once discursive thoughts are totally abandoned,  
 The practice of Chöd is no other than this.  
 Once mindfulness is achieved,  
 The level of final accomplishments is no other than this.  
 Once the [ultimate nature of] the mind is realized,  
 The definitive sign of realization is no other than this.

Abandoning all bodily activities,  
 Remain like a bunch of straw cut loose.  
 Abandoning all verbal expressions of speech,  
 Remain like a lute with its strings cut through.  
 Abandoning all mental activity,  
 This is Mahamudra.

2b

In the Dharma tradition of this old lady  
There is nothing to do other than this.

Ah, fortunate sons and disciples gathered here,  
This body of ours is impermanent  
like a feather on a high mountain pass,  
This mind of ours is empty and clear like the depth of space.  
Relax in that natural state, free of fabrication.  
When mind is without any support, that is Mahamudra.  
Becoming familiar with this, blend your mind with it—  
This is Buddhahood.

Like the waves in the water,  
naturally arising, naturally subsiding,  
Without conceptualizations,  
without abiding in extreme [views].  
In the primordial purity of mind,  
there is no transgression of your samaya.  
Free of desire and attachment and of extreme [views],  
Like a single light dispelling the darkness,  
You realize at once the teachings of Sutra,  
Tantra and all other scriptures.

If you aspire to this path,  
you will be free from the infinity of samsara.

You may recite mantras, be diligent in offering tormas,  
Be versed in the entire Tripitaka teachings,  
Including the Vinaya and the philosophical schools  
with their respective tenets,  
But it will not make you realize Mahamudra,  
the nature of the mind.

Attached to your own point of view,  
You merely obscure the clear light of your mind.  
Protecting vows which are merely conceptual  
Harms samaya in the ultimate sense.  
Remember free of mental fabrications,  
free of consideration for yourself.

3a

If you enter this path,  
you will defeat all mental afflictions without exception.  
If you achieve this path,  
you will attain the highest enlightenment.  
Those who don't aim for this are deluded fools.  
Those who don't enter this path are in darkness like the blind  
And certain to be carried away by the river of samsara's suffering.  
This suffering is unbearable—have compassion for these fools.  
If you wish to be freed from the suffering of samsara,  
At all times rely on a qualified lama,  
an erudite and realized spiritual friend.  
Pray to the lama with respect and devotion,  
Serve the lama well and request the oral instructions.

3b

Having analyzed the master's words,  
practice accordingly.  
Once the blessing has entered your heart,  
You will come to recognize [the true nature of] your mind.  
Alas, the phenomena of samsara have no essence.  
They are the cause of the suffering we experience,  
which increases and remains.  
Don't you realize that this life is being spent in agitation?  
If you imagine you will practice Dharma  
when you have the leisure,  
you will lose this opportunity.  
Human life is wasted in the thought,  
"I will practice Dharma later."  
What would happen if you were to die in an accident?

Supreme view is beyond all duality of subject and object.  
Supreme meditation is without distraction.  
Supreme activity is action without effort.  
Supreme fruition is without hope and fear.  
Supreme view is free from reference point.  
Supreme meditation is beyond conceptual mind.  
Supreme activity is practice without doing.  
Supreme fruition is beyond all extremes.

If you realize this, enlightenment is attained.  
If you enter this path [of Mahamudra],  
you will reach the essential nature.  
You cut wrong conceptions about inner, outer and in between.

If you don't meditate with perseverance now,  
and if died tomorrow,  
who then would provide you with authentic Dharma?  
If you don't do it yourself,  
what good will the Dharma practice of others do you?  
It is like a beggar's dream,  
in which he is rich in splendor, food and wealth.  
Upon awakening all is gone without a trace,  
like the passing of a bird in the sky.  
All composite phenomena in the world are just like that.

4a

Right now you have the opportunity.  
Look for the essence of mind—this is meaningful.  
When you look at mind, there's nothing to be seen.  
In this very not seeing, you see the definitive meaning.

You understand all the teachings of the higher and lower paths,  
You defeat the 84,000 kleshas,  
You perfect simultaneously the symptoms,  
The sign [of realization] and the level of final accomplishment  
And you cross over the ocean of samsara.  
This old lady has no instructions more profound than this  
to give you.

4b

My authentic teaching, the unique doctrine of the unborn,  
Is the greatest of all systems of profound instructions.  
The separation of body and mind and its blessing  
Is the greatest of all transferences of consciousness.  
The offering of the bodily aggregates  
Is the greatest of all banquets.

This wandering in mountain solitudes and fearsome places  
Is the greatest of all monasteries.  
This entourage of illusory gods and demons  
Is the greatest of all benefactors.  
This practice free of the extremes of hope and fear  
Is the greatest of all virtuous activities.  
This action, the unobstructed experience of single taste  
Is the greatest of all paths of action.  
This essence of ultimate meaning, beyond thought and  
expression,  
Is the greatest of all Dharma practices.

I, Labdrön, the Shining Light of Lab,  
Am the greatest of all women.  
Now my death in the unborn expanse  
Is the greatest of all ways to pass away.

(from *Machig Ladrön and the Foundations of Chod* pp.165-170)