The Nineteen Pith Instructions of the Great Master Saraha

(Collected Works of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon, vol. 7, no. 662, fol. 12b-14a)

I pay homage to the Guru!

The great Brahmin Saraha bestowed teachings on the Victor Maitri by way of nineteen pith instructions.

1. Although you know that all appearances are included within the mind, do not interrupt the virtue that is cultivated!

2. Although you have realised your mind as the Buddha, do not abandon the [meditation] master of your heart!

3. Although you are not cherishing hope concerning Buddhahood, do not disparage the excellent Dharma!

4. Although you do not fear hell, abandon subtle evil!

5. Although you do not fear [birth as a] hungry ghost, do not interrupt even the smallest liberality!
(6) Although you do not fear [birth as an] animal, maintain the vows of body, speech, and mind!

(7) Although you have realised the meaning of the non-existence of gods and demons, do not abandon the deity of meditation!

(8) Although you have realised the meaning of the non-existence of birth and death, continue to rely on a living body and practise!

(9) Although you have realised the meaning of birthlessness, do not interrupt the conduct that accords to the rules of virtue!

(10) Although you have realised the meaning of sameness, do not criticise ordinary people!

(11) Although you know everything you see and hear as the dharma-kāya, cultivate efforts concerning [the training of] your mind!

(12) Although you know all [beings] as the Buddha, do not kill even the tiniest creature!(1)
Although you are never separated from the original nature, always maintain your vows and pledges!

Although you have realised the view that is free from thoughts, cultivate efforts concerning an unbiased view!

Although you know the practice that is free from distraction cultivate efforts concerning the freedom from grasping and attachment!

Although a fearless conduct has arisen, practise a conduct that accords with [other] beings!

Although you have realised the pledges that are free from pretence, make your mind the judge!

Although there is no birth and death in the awareness of the resolve for awakening, familiarise yourself with the produced constituents [of body and mind] as that which is impermanent!

Although the vastness of awareness has burst out in you, carry the excellent guru on your crown!
Thus he has taught. [These are] the nineteen pith instructions of the great master Saraha for the Victor Maitripa.

I pay homage and praise the great Brahmin Saraha, who has fully completed the two accumulations, [possesses] a body that is like a rainbow, has completely realized the two truths, is free from the duality [of the phase of] meditative absorption and [the phase] following [that], and who has completely abandoned subject and object and knows the freedom from the two extremes.

I pay homage and praise the Excellent One from India, who has come many times [as an emanation] to the Land of Snows, who has received the excellent instructions from the Siddhas, and who is the foremost of all Sons of the Buddhas!

(Translation by Jan-Ulrich Sobisch)

Note:

Saraha criticizes those who claim that a realised master can commit evil without having to fear negative consequences because he has realised the true nature. Even if he has realised all beings as ‘primordially unborn,’ illusory appearance,’ or ‘optical illusion,’ that does not mean that killing them will not have karmic consequences. Jigten Sumgon emphatically maintains the same point in his ‘Single Intention’ (**dGongs geig**).