

Presenting the Path Lamrim

Lamrim instructions originally taught by Buddha Shakyamuni
Handed down in two separate lineage's

Wisdom Profound Path

Method Vast Path

Buddha
Manjushri
Nagarjuna

Buddha
Maitreya
Asanga

Atisha

Atisha (982 – 1054)

Atisha united both traditional lineage's: **Lamp For The Path To Enlightenment**

- Our Precious Human Life
- Death and Impermanence
- Danger of Lower Rebirth
- Refuge
- Karma
- Developing Renunciation for Cyclic Existence
- Equanimity
- Generating Bodhicitta; The Totally Open Heart
 - Recognising All Sentient Beings as One's Mothers
 - Remembering the Kindness of All Mother Sentient Beings
 - Repaying Kindness of All Mother Sentient Beings
 - Equalising and Exchanging Oneself with Others
 - Recognising the Shortcomings of Self-Cherishing
 - Recognising the Benefits of Cherishing Others
 - Giving and Taking: the Practice of Great Love and Great Compassion
- Samatha: Calm-Abiding Meditation
- Wisdom of Emptiness

The Three Scopes

Lama Je Tsongkhapa – received Lam Rim Lineage's and wrote:

Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path
Middling Exposition of the Stages of the Path
The Three Principal Aspects of the Path –

RENUNCIATION BODHICITTA CORRECT VIEW

KARMA

The General Characteristics of Karma

1. The results of actions are **Definite**
2. The results of actions **Increase**
3. If an action is **Not Performed** its result **Cannot be Experienced**
4. An action is **Never Wasted**

Factors in Severity of Non-Virtuous action

1. Nature of the action
2. The Intention
3. The Method
4. The Object
5. How Often the action is committed
6. The Application or non-application of an Opponent Power

Karma

The Ten Virtuous Actions:

1. Abandoning Killing
2. Abandoning Stealing
3. Abandoning Sexual Misconduct
4. Abandoning Lying
5. Abandoning Divisive Speech
6. Abandoning Hurtful Speech
7. Abandoning Idle Chatter
8. Abandoning Covetousness
9. Abandoning Malice
- 10.
11. Abandoning Holding Wrong Views

The Effects of Virtuous Actions

The Determining Power of the Vows Taken

Throwing Actions and Completing Actions

The Eight Attributes of a Fully Endowed Human Life:

1. The Advantages
2. Their Functions
3. Their Causes

How to Practise Moral Discipline having gained Conviction in the Law of Karma

The Four Opponent Powers:

- The degree of Purification we attain depends upon the **Strength** of these Powers.
- For the practice of Purification to be complete, all **Four Powers** must be present.

1. The Power of **Regret**
2. The Power of **Reliance**
3. The Power of **Remedy**
4. The Power of **Resolve**

"The moon and the stars may fall to the earth, the earth with all its mountains and dwelling places may disappear, and space itself may disappear, but it is impossible of Buddha to tell a lie"

King of Concentration Sutra.

Appendix One

The Eight Stages of Dying

The process of dying involves a progressive loss of physical, sensory, and mental functions as nervous activity closes down from the periphery to deep within the nervous system. There are eight stages of this process:

1. *Loss of physical power.* The limbs become thin and weak, vision is blurred and it is difficult to move the eyes. Sensations of suddenly falling or of being buried under earth may be felt, body colour fades and an inner vision like a silvery blue mirage is experienced.
2. *Loss of feelings.* Strong physical and mental feelings of pleasure or displeasure cease, the mouth is dry and sweating ceases, hearing weakens, the ringing sound in the ears stops, and the inner vision becomes like a smoke-filled room.
3. *Loss of discrimination.* One cannot recognize the faces or remember the names of friends and relatives, the hands and feet feel extremely cold, digestion ceases, inhalation is weak and exhalation is long, the sense of smell ceases, and the inner vision is of sparks.
4. *Loss of volitions.* One can no longer move the limbs, the purpose of work in this life is forgotten, the senses of touch and taste cease, breathing stops, and the tongue contracts and turns blue. The inner vision is like a dim light at the bottom of a dark well.
5. *Loss of consciousness.* Although one has stopped breathing, the death process is not yet complete and, under some circumstances, can still be reversed. The last thoughts now cease and the consciousness becomes more and more subtle over the final four stages.
6. *White vision.* The inner vision is like a clear, empty sky filled with the light of the full moon.
7. *Red vision.* A brighter inner vision like a clear, empty sky filled with the rays of a red sunset.
8. *Black vision.* A vision of total darkness, empty of any form, that ends in a momentary complete loss of consciousness.
9. *The clear-light of death.* This most subtle consciousness, like the clear sky at dawn, is the final vision of death. This can last up to three days and death is complete when the mind, together with its physical vehicle of wind, (*rlung, prana*) leaves the body. The eight visions then occur in reverse and one wakes up as an intermediate state being.

The intermediate (*bardo*) existence

Like in a dream, one's body is formed from the wind energy that accompanies the mind, and is a projection of the same karmic potential that causes the next birth. One's body is in the form of the future life, it can pass through the sky and through walls, it can see other bardo beings of similar nature and can be seen by human clairvoyants. The bardo existence can last up to forty-nine days.

The next life

Whatever place a bardo being thinks about, automatically its body goes there. The experience can be terrifying or pleasant, according to karma. Through karma, one arrives at the place where rebirth will occur. If one is to be born human, sometimes the bardo being sees its future parents copulating and feels desire for the parent of opposite sex and anger towards the parent of same sex. The desire irresistibly attracts it towards the mother's womb. The anger causes it to die, and the mind, in the state of clear light and together with the subtle wind, joins with the ovum that is about to be fertilized.

Gradually the visions are reversed and the wind energy, moved by mind, becomes the support of life and the primary factor behind embryonic development. If fertilization does not occur, the person reawakens within the bardo. The bardo existence rarely lasts longer than 49 days.

Prepared by Venerable Thubten Gyatso

How To Cultivate Mindfulness of Death By Way Of 9 Point Death Meditation

Root 1 Death is Certain

- Our Death is definite, nothing can prevent it
- Our Life Span cannot increase, it continuously Decreases.
- Death will come regardless whether or not we Have made time to practise Dharma.

*Conclusion/resolution "Knowing that I have to die, I must resolve to
To practise Dharma"*

Root 2 Time of Death is Uncertain

- Our Life Span is uncertain
- Things that can kill us are many, things that can keep Us alive are few.
- In general our Body is extremely fragile

*Conclusion/resolution "Knowing that I could die at any time, I must
Stop sacrificing my life to worldly concerns &
Immediately practice Dharma from today on."*

Root 3 Only Dharma helps at the time of Death

- No money or possessions help us
- Friends and family cannot help
- Not even our own body can help us at that time

*Conclusion/resolution "Finally, since nothing else can help me, I must
Devote myself fully to pure Dharma practice"*

REFUGE MODULE WEEEEK 4

The gateway to the Buddhist path of liberation is taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the spiritual community, known as the Sangha. Taking refuge involves wholehearted commitment to this spiritual path and to the one who revealed it – the Buddha. This does not mean that one cannot engage in certain Buddhist practices without making such a commitment. A wide range of Buddhist methods can be practised by people of other faiths and ideologies. But in terms of progressing along the Buddhist path, trust and commitment are essential.

B.Alan Wallace. Tibetan Buddhism from the ground up. P.80

Q. Discuss the above. What does trust and commitment mean to you. How does Possessing these qualities elevate 'performing a Buddhist practise' to 'Progressing along the Buddhist path'

"Some spiritually inclined people feel the teachings of the world's religions are antiquated and therefore no longer relevant to the modern world. Others refuse to commit themselves, doubting the authenticity of spiritual teachings so far removed in time from the original teachers. Their solution of often to take ultimate refuge in themselves, while experimenting with a variety of practices from one or more spiritual traditions."

pp.81-82

Q. Discuss the above. Identify the possible advantages and the probable disadvantages of taking this stance.

Refuge Module

4 Ways of going for Refuge in the Three Jewels

1. **Knowing the good qualities of the Three Jewels**
2. **Knowing the distinctions between the Three Jewels**
3. **With Commitment**
4. **By disavowing any other Refuges**

Commitments of taking Refuge in the Three Jewels – see commitment handout

Benefits of going for Refuge in the Three Jewels:

1. We are included among Buddhists
2. We are worthy to uphold all vows
3. We reduce & eliminate past negative karma
4. We accumulate vast merit
5. We will not fall into the miserable realms
6. We are protected from harm by humans and non-humans
7. We will accomplish everything we wish
8. We will quickly achieve Buddhahood.

Discuss these benefits and share your understanding of each one.

The Commitments of Taking Refuge

What is it to be avoided

1. Having taken refuge in Buddha, you should not take refuge from the depths of your heart in worldly gods. You should not entrust yourself from the depths of your heart to non-virtuous friends or teachers of non-Buddhist teachings that have no supporting levels.
2. Having taken refuge in Dharma you should avoid harming any being, either directly or indirectly.
3. Having taken refuge in Sangha you should avoid entrusting yourself to, and keeping company, with negative friends and followers of hedonism.

What is it to be practiced

1. Having taken refuge in Buddha; you should regard even statues as being actual Buddhas. You should avoid showing disrespect to them.
2. Having taken refuge in Dharma you should show respect by recognising all Dharma scripture as an actual Dharma Jewel. Avoid placing texts on the bare ground.
3. Having taken refuge in Sangha you should regard even one member of the Sangha as being the actual Sangha. You should avoid discriminating within the Sangha community and should have equal respect for all.

General Advice

- ✦ Rely upon holy beings, listen to the holy Dharma, and after correctly comprehending, follow the Dharma and practice it.
- ✦ Don't let your senses become over excited. Control your senses when in danger of creating negative karma and take as many vows as you are capable of keeping.
- ✦ Have a compassionate attitude towards sentient beings.
- ✦ When eating or drinking make effort to offer to the Triple Gem. Exert yourself to make offerings to the Triple Gem.
- ✦ Every morning and evening make three prostrations to the Triple Gem.

The commitments of Aspiring Bodhichitta

1. To develop inspiration, contemplate the advantages of bodhichitta.
2. Recite the bodhichitta prayer three times a day and three times a night.
3. Do not give up bodhichitta because of the mischievous deeds of sentient beings.
4. Work to accumulate physical and mental merit.
5. Do not cheat or deceive your preceptor or guru. Abandon deliberately lying to any sentient being.
6. Do not discourage others from practicing virtuous actions or cause them to regret the virtue they have created. Take upon yourself the responsibility to establish all sentient beings in the Mahayana path.
7. Do not abuse or criticize a bodhisattva. Since you don't know who is a bodhisattva, its best to treat all sentient beings as Bodhisattvas and Buddhas.
8. Do not put on an air of selfless thought or pretend to be a scholar or conceal your shortcomings. Do not discriminate amongst sentient beings.

Lam Rim Texts

Atisha - Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment

Tsong Khapa - Lamrim Chenmo and The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Dalai Lama 3 – Essence of Refined Gold

Pabongka – Liberation in the Palm of your hand

Yangsi Rinpoche - Practicing the Path: A Commentary on the Lamrim Chenmo

Geshe Sopa - Steps on the Path to Enlightenment 5 Vols

HHDL - Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment

HHDL - From here to Enlightenment

Geshe Wangchen - Step by Step

Geshe Rabten - The Essential Nectar

Geshe Wangyal - The Jewelled Staircase

**Geshe Archarya Thubten Loden - The Path to Enlightenment in Tibetan Buddhism;
Meditations on the Path to Enlightenment and Essence of the Path to Enlightenment.**

Turning the Wheel of Dharma

1st Turning - The Four Noble Truths

- (1) The Truth of Suffering
- (2) The Truth of the Origin of Suffering
- (3) The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
- (4) The Truth of The Path leading to the cessation of suffering

Noble Eightfold Path

1. Right Understanding
2. Right Thought
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

The Causes and Conditions that lead to Suffering

Delusions			
Ignorance	Afflictive Emotions	Karmic Actions	True Suffering
Of the selflessness Of Persons and Phenomena	Attachment Aversion	Physical Mental Verbal	SUFFERING
THE TRUTH OF ORIGIN			The Truth of Sufferings

Taken from chart in The Foundation of Buddhist Thought - Geshe Tashi Tsering

Mind and It's Potential- hand out 1

The Topic of Mind is very subtle. It is very difficult to talk about Mind
HHDL -

'..... an entity that has the nature of mere experience, that is , **CLARITY**
and **KNOWING**. It is the knowing nature or agency, that is called
Mind, and this is none material.

HHDL

'..... the continuum of our **CONSCIOUSNESS**..... is beginingless.
Though in a state of constant flux, an ever changing, dynamic process,
the basic nature of consciousness never changes.

HHDL

Mind and its Potential

WHOLESOME/POSITIVE MINDS

UNWHOLESOME/NEGATIVE MINDS

NUTRAL/INDIFFERENT MINDS

MAIN MINDS (primary/basic) (6)

MENTAL FACTORS (51)