

# LAM RIM RETREAT

## STUDY NOTES



*Lama Tsong Khapa a.k.a. Je Tsong Khapa or Lozang Dragpa – author of Lam Rim Chen Mo and founder of Geluk*

Six Day Retreat  
Kunsang Yeshe Retreat Centre  
19<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014

with Geshe Sherab  
& Venerable Yönten

## KEY TERMS

*Simple "meaning" definitions – not complete debate definitions*

### \*THE FOUR SEALS

Points summarizing the main teachings of the Buddha.

1. All compounds are impermanent (*things produced from causes and conditions are subject to change*)
2. All contaminated phenomena are in the nature of suffering (*contaminated by karma & disturbing emotions*)
3. All phenomena are empty of an inherently existent, independent self (*this is ultimate truth*)
4. Nirvana is Peace (*freedom from samsara/suffering*)

*\*Different than the 4 Noble Truths of: suffering, origin, cessation & path*

### KARMA [ACTION]

The Mental Factor of Intention. Refers to the Law of Cause and Effect whereby positive actions ripen as happiness and negative, harmful actions ripen as suffering. The action/karma can be created through any of the 3 doors of body,

### SAMSARA [CYCLIC EXISTENCE]

The 5 aggregates (*basis of labeling a person*) appropriated, perpetuated and bound by karma and disturbing emotions.

### BODHICHITTA [MIND OF ENLIGHTENMENT]

The [main] mind with two aspirations: to benefit sentient beings and to become a Buddha [in order to do that].

### BUDDHAHOOD [ENLIGHTENMENT]

The 5<sup>th</sup> Pathway Awareness (*the Path of No More Learning*) which is freedom from afflictive & cognitive obscurations - omniscience

## ORIGIN OF LAM RIM TEACHINGS

### BUDDHA SHAKYAMUNI (566 - 485 BCE)

Taught the Noble 8 Fold Path as well as the perfection of wisdom sutras – which explicitly teach the **profound view** (wisdom)

#### MAITREYA BUDDHA

Although a deity he appeared as a bodhisattva at the time of Buddha and the lineage of the **extensive deeds** was transmitted through him

#### MANJUSHRI

Although a deity he appeared as a bodhisattva at the time of Buddha and the lineage of the **profound view** was transmitted through him.

#### ASANGA (300 – 370 CE)

After many years of practice met Maitreya directly, went to Tushita heaven where he received the 5 great teachings, one of which was The Ornament of Clear Realizations which explicitly teaches the extensive deeds

#### NAGARJUNA (150 – 250 CE)

Prophesied by the Buddha and through the blessing of Manjushri he clarified the meaning of the Buddha's teachings on the profound view in the teachings on madhyamaka

Survarnavipi Serlingpa

Vidyakokila the younger

#### LAMA ATISHA (982 – 1054 CE)

Invited to Tibet by Janchub-ö in order to revive the dharma. He had many auspicious visions and received the blessings of Buddha and other deities, and in writing *The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*, he combined the teachings of the two lineages (and also the lineage of the wave of conduct which passed from Manjushri to Shantideva). He clarified how all the teachings of the Buddha are not contradictory, especially in relation to sutra and tantra

#### LAMA TSONG KHAPA (1357 – 1419 CE)

Over time Buddha's teachings became dispersed again. Lama Tsong Khapa brought them together, clarifying further the Buddha's intent where it had been lost or misunderstood by writing *Lam Rim Chen Mo*

# MAIN LAM RIM TOPICS

## PRELIMINARIES

1. **Correctly Relying on a Spiritual Friend:** Having fully assessed a Teacher's qualities, especially ethics and markedly superior knowledge to oneself, relying on them with complete trust.
  - a. **Developing the characteristics of a reliable student**

2. **How to Meditate & how to act between sessions:** The importance of motivation, mindfulness, study & reflection etc

3. **Perfect Human Rebirth:** Understanding its rarity, being motivated to take full advantage of this precious human life.

*Goal: to make this life meaningful by pursuing a spiritual path*

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## 1<sup>ST</sup>: INITIAL SCOPE

1. **Impermanence & Death:** Looking at the changeability of our favorable circumstances, as well as the certainty of our own death, in order to use time efficiently for the spiritual path
2. **Karma:** Understanding actions and their and effects
3. **Reflecting on the 3 Lower realms & their causes:** to develop mindfulness & restraint (*and if possible to develop compassion*)
4. **Refuge:** Through fear of what your untamed mind can create now and in the future, together with the faith of conviction that the Buddhist tradition offers accurate advice in how to tame that mind, having your primary reliance on the Buddha, Dharma (the Teachings) & Sangha (Community).

*Goal: to have another perfect human rebirth (or higher) in order to continue the spiritual path*

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# MAIN LAM RIM TOPICS

## 2<sup>ND</sup>: MEDIUM SCOPE

1. **Reflecting on the Shortcomings of Samsara in General:** Even in the upper realms there are faults. Looking at the 12 Links of Dependent Arising and the 4 Noble Truths:
  - i. **Truth of Suffering** (*can be divided in several ways*):
    - **For example the 6 types of suffering:** 1) uncertainty; 2) insatiability; 3) casting off bodies repeatedly; 4) repeated rebirth; 5) descending from high to low; 6) having no companions (born alone, die alone)
  - ii. **Truth of Origin:** Karma & Delusions (*namely Ignorance*)
  - iii. **True Cessations:** From attainment of the liberated path of the path of seeing (direct realization of emptiness)
  - iv. **True Paths:** methods for attaining true cessations
2. **The Determination to be free:** a.k.a. renunciation or the intention to definitely emerge (*from samsara*)
3. **The 3 Higher Trainings:** Ethics, Concentration & Wisdom

*Goal: to achieve Nirvana – complete Liberation from Samsara*

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## 3<sup>RD</sup>: GREAT SCOPE

1. **The Benefits of Bodhichitta (*the Mind of Enlightenment*)**
  2. **How to Develop Bodhichitta**
    - The Sevenfold Cause and Effect
    - Equalizing and Exchanging Self for Others
  3. **How to Train After Developing Bodhichitta**
    - Training in the 6 Perfections
    - The Uncommon Path of Vajrayana
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## RECOMMENDED READING

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### **The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment [Lam Rim Chen Mo]**

By Lama Tsong Khapa

### **Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand**

By Pabongka Rinpoche

### **How to Practice**

By His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama

### **Practicing the Path**

By Yangsi Rinpoche

### **Steps on the Path to Enlightenment**

By Geshe Lhundrup Sopa

### **Meditations on the Path to Enlightenment**

Geshe Acharya Thubten Loden

### **How to Meditate**

By Kathleen McDonald (Venerable Sangye Khadro)

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