

THE PREPARATORY RITES— LIBERATION IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND COURSE OVERVIEW

Thursdays 7:00 – 8:45 pm, February 21 – April 4, 2019

Instructor

Kushok Lobsang Dhamchoe, Spiritual Director of Gaden Samten Ling Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Society

Series Description — *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand: A Concise Discourse on the Path to Enlightenment*

Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand is a transcript of an oral discourse given by Pabongka Rinpoche, one of the most influential Gelug lamas of the 20th century. In his 24-day discourse, Pabongka condenses both Atisha's *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* and Tsong Khapa's masterwork *The Great Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*. He brilliantly illuminates these core teachings that trace back to Shakyamuni Buddha from an unbroken lineage. For that reason, this text is considered one of the 18 great Jangchub Lamrim texts of the Gelugpa lineage.

Course Description — The Preparatory Rites

The Preparatory Rites is the second course in our *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* series. The six preparatory practices were taught by Atisha, who learned the rites from his own teacher before coming to Tibet. The 5th Dalai Lama recommended doing these practices as part of one's morning meditation session. The preparatory rites are significant because they are completely sufficient for anyone wishing to start a Buddhist practice.

In this course, students will learn how to set up their meditation space, make offerings, the best body posture and mind-set for meditation sessions, and how to visualize the Merit Field (a.k.a. Refuge Visualization or Field of Accumulation). Should time permit, Kushok will cover the Seven-limb Prayer and Requesting the Lineage Lamas, the final two rites rites.

Course Objective

The objectives of this course are as follows: 1) to provide guidance on how to develop a strong connection with the Merit Field in order to imprint a strong karmic connection to the path to enlightenment, and 2) to provide instruction that helps one accumulate enough merit to ensure a future human rebirth. Only through an optimum human rebirth do we have the potential to achieve enlightenment. This is the reason why such emphasis is placed on not wasting this precious opportunity.

Course Material

A syllabus will be provided outlining the proposed weekly topics and readings. Students are asked to prepare for each class by completing assigned readings and to bring their texts and questions on the material to class. Please note that the syllabus may be subject to change as the Teacher will always accommodate the needs of the students at the time.

Course Text

Liberation in the Palm of your Hand—A Concise Discourse on the Path to Enlightenment, Pabongka Rinpoche, Edited by Trijang Rinpoche. New Revised Edition 2006. Copies of the book can be purchased from Gaden Samten Ling's bookstore. The text can also be purchased on-line through FPMT and Amazon. The older 1997 edition can also be used and page numbers for reading assignments will also be given for this book in the syllabus. An e-book copy of the text is available through FPMT however page numbers may not be consistent with the syllabus.

Course Prerequisites

The Preliminaries is highly recommended as a prerequisite to this course but is not essential. If you did not take The Preliminaries course, we recommend that you catch up on the readings from that course by contacting our office and requesting a copy of The Preliminaries Syllabus.