

The LAMRIM: An Abbreviated Outline

A commonly used outline for *lamrim* teachings today is in the English translation from Tibetan of *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* by Pabongka Rinpoche. An abbreviated and annotated outline follows to show the structure of this *lamrim*.

Preliminaries

- Greatness of the author of the *lamrim*, to establish the authenticity of the teaching
- Greatness of the *lamrim* itself, to gain respect for it
- How the instructions are to be received and given
- How students are to be guided through the subjects
- How to rely on a spiritual guide
- How to train one's mind on the basis of the correct way to rely on the spiritual guide
- The way to encourage oneself to take the essence of this precious human rebirth
- The way to take the essence of this precious human rebirth – that is, the training of one's mind in the paths of the three scopes included within the *lamrim*

The path shared with persons who have a modest scope motivation

(striving for a rebirth in the upper realms)

- Reality that this life will end and that one will die
- Suffering in a rebirth in the lower realms (a rebirth as a hell being, a hungry ghost, or an animal, which one would want to avoid)
- (so one takes) Refuge in the three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha
- (and adjusts one's behaviour of *body*, *speech* and *mind* according to the) Law of cause and effect, that is, karma

This will lead one to a favourable rebirth within cyclic existence in the human realm, demigod realm, or god realm.

The path shared with persons who have a medium scope motivation

(striving for liberation from cyclic existence)

- Truth of suffering (in cyclic existence in general, including the favourable rebirths)
- Truth of the causes of suffering (the afflictive emotions, and ignorance)
- The truth of cessation (the state that is free of suffering and its origins)
- The truth of paths (the way to attain this state free of suffering and its causes by practicing ethics, concentration, and wisdom)
- Presentation of the 12 links of dependent arising

The training in the medium scope path will lead to the development of the wish to be liberated from all un-free rebirths in cyclic existence caused by the power of delusions (afflictive emotions and ignorance) and karma.

The path of persons who have a high scope motivation

(striving for complete buddhahood)

- Advantages of the mind of enlightenment (the wish to become a buddha for the welfare of all sentient beings)
- The way to develop the mind of enlightenment
- The 7-point instruction in seeing all sentient beings as one's mothers (from previous lives and contemplating their kindness towards oneself)
- Instruction on how to exchange one's self-interest for others' interest (by looking at the drawbacks of self-cherishing, and the advantages of cherishing others)
- The way to train one's mind after developing the mind of enlightenment
- Training in the six perfections of: generosity, ethics, patience, joyful effort, concentration, and wisdom

Sources:

- Taken and adapted from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamrim>.
- Pabongka Rinpoche. (2006) *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand: A Concise Discourse on the Path to Enlightenment*, new revised edition. Edited in the Tibetan by Trijang Rinpoche. Translated into English by Michael Richards. Boston: Wisdom Publications.